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THREE BOOKS OF GOD

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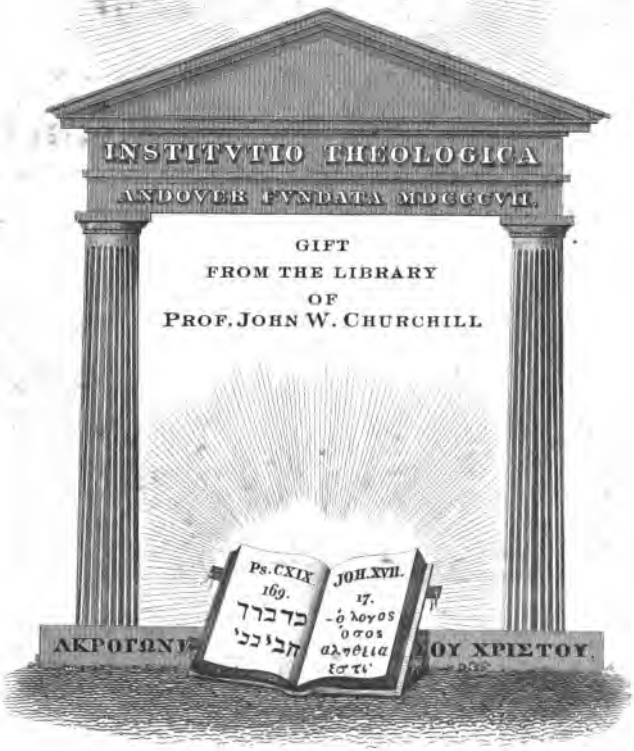

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THREE BOOKS OF GOD:

NATURE, HISTORY, AND SCRIPTURE.

SERMONS BY

GEORGE DAWSON, M.A.

EDITED BY GEORGE ST. CLAIR, F.G.S.

"It is a long way from granite to the oyster, farther yet to Plato and the preaching of the immortality of the soul. Yet all must come, as surely as the first atom has two sides."—RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

LONDON:
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"And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

"And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

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PREFACE.

THIS book treats mainly of the relations between Scripture and Science, and boldly applies natural law and the doctrine of evolution to secular and sacred history. But Evolution, as Mr. Dawson uses it, is more the Efficient Nature of Emerson than the Natural Selection of Darwin.

The discourses of the last volume—"THE AUTHENTIC GOSPEL"—set forth the Religion of Charity, and showed that salvation and religion are independent of views and opinions. The present volume has a different cast, and shows that Christ's religion, rightly understood, favours the growth of knowledge, and should lead the Christian to accept the results of historical and scientific investigation.

"THE AUTHENTIC GOSPEL" was comforting, and tended to breadth of charity. The present volume is enlightening, and tends to breadth of view.

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These sermons also, like those last published, were mostly preached near the end of Mr. Dawson's life; and the marked difference between the two series is owing to the selection which has been made according to subject. The two series of discourses would have to be read together and made to interpenetrate one another, to afford a fair specimen of Mr. Dawson's teaching as his people listened to it.

It has not been thought desirable to cumber the pages with foot-note references to Scripture texts, where a Concordance will serve the purpose; and it would have been wrong to correct the language of quotations where the deviation from literalness is conscious and intended.

These discourses, like the last, are mostly printed from Miss Beauclerc's reports. There is only one exception, and that is the sermon on "Christ fulfils Moses," a valuable link in the series, for which the Editor is indebted to Mr. James Wright.

CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR,
BIRMINGHAM,
August, 1882.

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THE NEARNESS OF GOD, SCIENCE NOTWITHSTANDING.

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us."—1 JOHN iv. 11, 12.

THERE is a saying of Hazlitt's, bold, and at first seeming wondrous true: "In the days of Jacob there was a ladder between heaven and earth; but now the heavens have gone further off, and have become astronomical."

This may be taken as illustrating the belief of a large number of people, who imagine that, somehow or other, the earth in its youth was better off and nearer to God than it can possibly be with the larger, fuller, and more accurate scientific knowledge that it has now. There are times in our lives when we almost wish we could believe things, as we believed with the simple faith of our childhood. But this is rather a passing passion of the fancy,

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than a steadfast desire of the mind; and none of us really wish to believe the moon is only the size it looks, or that the sun moves round the earth.

As a symbol, Jacob's ladder has ever been beautiful to the minds of men, and we sometimes wonder whether there be a ladder answering in *our* age to the ladder of this dream, whereby we may climb to the heights of heaven, and come nearer to God. But now, if there be such a ladder, the angels all seem to go one way—upwards, to the heavens, and none descend. Hazlitt, then, sets forth the conviction that true scientific knowledge leaves us further in spirit from the Creator. Scientific knowledge—knowledge of things as they are—has nothing whatever to do with man's spiritual acceptance of any truth vital to the soul.

"The heavens have gone farther off." Yes, and why not? In the days when men believed that the blue firmament was near, and something to be palpably touched, if they could but get up to it, their sense of the nearness of the heavens was a small thing, and the loss of that sense of nearness is little to be mourned. You remember that before astronomy became a science, one said that the stars were but holes through which the heavenly glory streamed. It was the best astronomy he

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had, or in those days could find; but is any man farther from God because he knows that every star is a mighty world, the handiwork of God? What has any distance or nearness of the heavens to do with the deep things of the human spirit, with the love of things divine and gracious, with the passion after holiness by which man grows near to God? Because, by a flash of lightning, I can speak to the other side of the world; because I live in a generation in which men gain the strength of giants, and can move mountains—am I farther from God? As if these things interfered with God's spirit; as if, because we have grown scientific, the heavens are farther off than they used to be!

This is the babble of the time, and speech more foolish was never spoken. Man's nearness to God, or distance from Him, arises from no scientific knowledge, nor from the want of it. Man grows near to God by likeness of soul. Let the "Iliad" of Homer, and the "Paradise Lost" of John Milton, tell how near to God man's soul may grow to be. Give us one glorious strain of music from Beethoven, that we may learn how divine the answering harmony of our own hearts may be. Let man's joy in the beauties of sun and mountain and blue sky, and the glories of his heroism, his

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martyrdom, his self-sacrifice and love, proclaim his kinship with God, and show that he is of Godlike spirit—and remains for ever God's dear darling. Therefore, as far as I am concerned, let the heavens become as astronomical as they will. Let one touch of man's true nature come, one great inspiration of heroism, one touch of true love, and where are these things? The soul leaps to the soul, the lover to the loved; through all material surroundings man cries to God in claim of kinship, and God hears that claim and answers it.

Still, you may say, the revelation of God's power made by science has removed the sense of His immediate presence. Then, science has done a good work. Such a sense of nearness, brought about by a want of knowledge and a mean apprehension of God's power, might belong to idiots, and is certainly *unneeded* by mankind. One can give that "sense of God's nearness" a benediction, a fervent blessing, and let it go as quickly as may be. I have no belief at all in that talk of the age which says that all this growth of knowledge has tended to remove man's faith in God's presence. Shall I, because I no longer believe, as the ancients did, that God is this to-day, and that to-morrow; that He is a creature of impulse, like a man; a

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Being petting one little nation because of its narrow sectarianism, and departing from His fixed plans to gratify a people's egotism; because I believe that God never allows cause and consequence to part company; that He has no favourites, in the human sense; that over all His children He is always watchful; that every man is in his proper place; that to all alike God deals justice and mercy;—shall I say, because of this, that God's presence has gone farther off—like those heavens which, in Hazlitt's saying, "have become astronomical"? Shall I, who hold these sublime faiths, have need to ask, for a moment, whether I have lost or gained?

God is to us a greater Being than the ancients ever knew. Though we may fancy that the heavens, or whatever other material place men may have thought He dwelt in, have grown distant, His spirit has grown near. It is the glory of earthly love to clasp, to hold, to have in near communion, to see, to hear, to touch. Wait until some one whom you love is coming from a distant land. Then the railway time-table and the clock are often consulted. He is here, or there, within a hundred miles, fifty, ten, now five miles—with every mile nearer an added hope, a sweeter expectation—until he stands before you, face to face, and you join

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hands. Then distance is reckoned, indeed; and nearness is the joy and glory of love. For though there have been queries as to the truth of the poetical saying that "absence makes the heart grow fonder," there has been no query, so far as I know, about the pleasantness of having those we love near at hand, and constantly within sight and sound. Admitted, then, that for all earthly human purposes remoteness means estrangement. At least, in the end, it leads to it. If we were speaking of mere humanities, we might, with Hazlitt, lament the time when earth seemed so near to heaven. But when we come to speak of Him whom no man hath seen at any time, we go to the spirituality of things—we measure no longer by earthly measure. Whoso learns his lessons about God only by physical signs; who, by the flash of the lightning and the roll of the thunder, knows all he knows of God, has learned his lesson wrongly. By such as have learned a wiser lesson, the saying that "no man hath seen God at any time" is accepted as a mere earthly interpretation of humanity and of God. For, if we love one another, God dwelleth in us; and the physical remoteness of the heavens, wherein man of old chose to believe that God had His dwelling-place, becomes of no account.

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With love lives no sort of distance, whether it be corporeal or of position, whether the lovers be wide apart, or whether the glory of the one and the meanness of the other do seem to sever them; love knows no check, and submits to no earthly bondage. Where lives the greatness of that lovely passage which I read to you just now? What could his greatness do to hold back Joseph from the bosom of his little brother, Benjamin? No longer the little Joseph, habited in the coat of plaid of divers colours with which his father had decked him—a dreamer of power, but a dreamer only—but now, here in Egypt, was he Prime Minister, seated on a throne, surrounded by attendants; adviser of Pharaoh, governor, grand plenipotentiary, "Your Excellency," your "Serene Highness," and sundry other matters. Why, what could all this do to hold back Joseph's love? Had he not tried to hide it, whilst he questioned carelessly—"And the old man, thy father? and the lad, thy brother?" Had he not striven to hide himself from their eyes, and had he not been to them a harsh governor, testing them with wantonness and almost cruelty? Did we not feel for these brothers when they came with their pathetic plea, speaking to him of "the old man, our father, thy servant?" He tested

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them in all ways: he would hide his love for a while; but at last, in spite of himself, it broke from him, and he fell upon Benjamin's neck and wept. Knowing what we know, we forgive the seeming cruelty, and can understand how love so great should wait before revealing itself. But here was this Joseph visited by his poor brethren, the sons of an old shepherd, strangers, and in fear in a far country; and he, Serene Highness, plenipotentiary, and what not, lifted into a sphere of astronomical greatness and distance—what did it matter? It seemed quite impossible that this sun of brightness and of power should love little Benjamin. But he turned to the Egyptians—"Go out! go out!"—and fell upon little Benjamin's neck and kissed him. These greatnesses had their sphere; but love was outside them and above them, and scorned them.

There is an old saying, "Love laughs at locksmiths," which simply means, that physical obstruction—bars of iron and so forth—can offer no check to that which cometh of the spirit.

Men have got into confusion, and read backwards when they come to study. It is a pure reversal of the truth, to say that God is farther off because the heavens have become astronomical, that God

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is farther away because we know Jupiter, and because we can tell how many miles of comparatively worthless ether Saturn swims through in the course of each cycle. We have made a tariff of these things, and have grown to believe that bigness means greatness—to associate bulk with majesty. I have seen mountains in my time. I have beheld the glories of nature in her most glorious aspects and places; but I have been weighed down by no feeling of my own meanness by their size. Is the soul of man small by reason of the Alps? We ask, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" owning our weakness in the sight of God; but then, again, we may say, even here, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." Though, at times, the greatness of the mere physical majesty of the earth seems to dwarf man, the soul counts itself above these things, and exults in its own majesty. These things have nought to do with those matters wherein man's real greatness lies; and if there is any one doctrine, which, in these days of Huntingdon sentiment,* I, for one, would scorn, it is that which professes that

* William Huntingdon, an eccentric preacher, loved to call himself "coal-heaver" and "sinner saved." See a notice in Chambers' "Book of Days."

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man is, in himself, contemptibly small amid the vastnesses of the universe, and that when a man has run up a parcel of vulgar Alps, he is in duty bound to feel himself debased and made extremely small. As if he were not greater than those Alps, which are, after all, nothing more than heaps—the biggest heaps we know, perhaps, but only heaps, and which in these days we could get carted away for a "consideration"! What are your mountains after all? To stand and look at a young mother, and to watch her as she passionately kisses her baby, and lavishes all manner of foolish, sweet, tender names upon it—to have seen this, and to have understood it, is better than to have stood on the top of the biggest sand-heap the world has to show.

Suppose, for a moment, that God really dwelt in those astronomical heavens, and that for a little while again they should cease to be astronomical, and should come as near as in childhood's innocent folly we fancied them to be, so near, in fact, that if you wished to go into the immediate presence of God, you might get there by an arrangement of some fifteen post balloons. Do you—does any rational man—suppose that the human soul would be one whit nearer God than it is now? Or if you

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sigh, as some have done, and as some still do, for the time in which God walked through the streets of Jerusalem, in some sense in which he does not walk about London, the advance of the ages has but thrown you back. You have degenerated from the spiritual religion of your own day to a longing for the physical perception which was necessary for Jew and Gentile in those early days, but which, by that man who has really absorbed the spirit of the Christianity of his time, is altogether unneeded. If the God you long to know is the God of the spirit, who comes to the hearts of all who seek for Him in spirit and in truth, who, in every motion of holy desire and love, lives in the soul, who stirs men to penitence, moves them to contrition, draws them by His own sweet, strong influence to Himself—if this is the God you seek and long to know, your God is always near you. So long as men can hold to this spiritual perception of God, science has done no mischief; and whilst it has increased man's knowledge, has increased, too, his belief in his nearness to God; has shown him that his knowledge of nature has altered no canon of the eternal laws; has cast no shade on any brightness of human mercy, or human love; has made no change in any way, in the glorious relationships between the

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human soul and God, by which alone man can rise to the height of his own marvellous capacities, and in which alone is his belief, his pride, his hope.

No learned inanity of chemistry can rob of its glory one single human tear. I know exactly what my own blood consists of; but the marvel and the mystery, and the glory of my being is not chilled by that little bit of science. I know exactly what my bones are made of, and can calculate to a nicety what they would be worth when I have done with them, if applied to agricultural purposes—all these things I know; but what then? If you can analyze a tear, and can tell me that it consists of so much saline matter and so much water, and so forth, what then? Does the knowledge of that make less divinely beautiful the tear which comes of passionate love? the tear of the kindly hearted who look on misery? the tear of penitence? Are these less lovely? "Watery particles, with some saline matter," all of them. Take one's heart, and call it a "force-pump," and then what have you done? You have increased human knowledge and have done wisely and well; but what have you knocked down? You have destroyed no feeling, broken no hope, changed no place of sentiment. The scientific man has

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nothing to do with these things, and, if he is wise, will not meddle with them.

When the day comes for a strong passion, the knowledge of the details of a scientific analysis will not hold it in check. There are two books—one of the body, and one of the soul—one of matter, and one of spirit; and that declaration of Hazlitt's about the heavens having become astronomical, is the result of trying to read God in the wrong book. There is but one book out of which God can be read, and that is the book of the spirit.

Thus, then, God is hidden to that man who seeks Him by the eye, and is revealed to him who seeks Him in spirit. Most closely hidden in thick darkness to him who seeks a physical presence of His deity, He is ever near to him who, with true spiritual perception, seeks Him. What is it to me that Jacob believed heaven could be scaled by a ladder, or that I know Jupiter is so many miles away? I know that God can be brought near in spirit, and through the heart's experiences, common to all. When King David's child dies, does not the king-warrior and poet feel it as strongly as he would have done when a shepherd? No height of position, or of intellect, can break through the power of feeling.

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A religion, such as you and I profess—a religion which teaches that God's dear Son came down from heaven to earth, and took upon him the form of man, and walked this world, doing a good man's work in it; and which teaches, further, that in the spirit God is still as near as when in the person of His Son He walked in Nazareth, dignifying alike the earth and man—makes man more loveable, the earth more glorious, and the presence of God, to such as care to know it, an eternal reality. Thus man grows glorified; "a little lower than the angels," and but very little, and having within him higher possibilities. Man came out of God's soul, and on one side is close to God, His younger brother, His darling. On the other side, man is a worm—earth of the earth, corruptible, and falling to corruption. As a creature "crushed before the moth," it is a satisfaction to him to know that God is ever near, and a thing to lament to learn that His abode seems ever so little removed from us. But we have learned, we know and are assured, that in all places, and in all people who love righteousness God dwells. To the loving, He is ever close; He dwells in them, and they in Him.

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THE DUTY OF STUDYING THE THREE BOOKS OF GOD.

Evening, July 16th, 1876.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."—MATT. xxii. 37.

THIS threefold love is answerable to a threefold division of the nature that is in us. For these expressions "heart," and "soul," and "mind," were not wearisome repetitions of the same thing. They who know the words of the wisest men, know that whether in speech or writing no word is wasted, nor can be taken away without loss. Just as it was said that from the great law of God "not one jot or one tittle should pass away," for if it were not wanted, it had not been there—so with the words of the wise there is nothing that can be spared. Even the smallest is of consequence; it

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is like the brush of a great painter—it may be hidden in the result, but it is wanted in the process. Therefore, I ask you whether you have put to yourselves the question, What is the difference between loving God with the heart, with the soul and with the mind?

We will take the last—loving God with the mind—for I find that this is the least preached about, and the least practised. To love God with the *heart*, forms a large part of the best books of devotion, and is prominent in the sweetest of saints, whose lives are the most touching. To love God with the *soul* is to be full of enthusiasm, to be crowned with joy, to overflow with a true spiritual rapture. But to love with the heart and with the soul is easier than to love with the mind. To love God with the mind requires study and pains; it is not a thing of emotion, and cannot be gained in an hour. Most men prefer the emotions that come of themselves, to the sublimities that come after deep study. The majority would desire to be played upon by the muses, but there *are* some men who love things that require cost, study, patience, pains, endeavour. Living for other times, they love God with all their heart and soul, and with all their mind as well.

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Now, I ask, what distinct difference do you make between these—between loving God with the heart and soul and with the mind? I would not have your child ask you the difference, and you not be able to answer him; so, I am going to try to make plain to you what is meant by loving God with the mind. To make it plain to you, one cannot do better than follow the Master's method; for when he had a great truth to teach, he did it in homely fashion. When he wished to set forth God's love for the strayed one, he spoke of the woman and the lost piece of silver, and her long search into dismal corners; of her thankfulness when it was found, and her sweet gossiping with her neighbours over the recovered coin. All these things are brought in, in order that a lofty truth may be made plain to lowly people. So now we will seek a few homely things and come back to this word of the Divine.

There are two phrases, then, which are sometimes used by master to workman, father to son, teacher to scholar, mistress to servant; and one of these phrases is, "I see you have got no heart in your work." There are a great many duties in life which it would be only talking fine and not talking truth to say that we have any heart for. But the

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beauty of it is to do them as duties, to pay them as taxes. You cannot say you love to pay taxes, but then you know the tax is the friend of national greatness; the promoter of wisdom and cleanness, and therefore ultimately of religiousness. You may not pay with cheerfulness, but you may pay with punctuality.

Then there is that other phrase, "I do wish you would put a little more mind into that." What do you mean? Not that he might *like* it better, but that he would *do* it better: I wish, before you let that hammer fall, you would let your thoughts fall upon what you are doing. It is the habit of doing a thing with a minimum of thinking that is complained of. This is found to prevail in the degree that people are dunces, and uneducated. For instance, in burning weather like this, some servant who has been scolded in winter for leaving the door open, shuts it. I could teach a dog better than that.

Take another illustration. Suppose you have some great author that you are singularly fond of. What do you do to show that you love him? If you loved Shakespeare you would read his plays, study them; re-study them; learn them; quote them. Poor is the love that needs no vision; poor

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is the affection that needs no kissing; dull the friendship that needs no hand-shaking. He who loves the god is often at the altar, and he who loves a great author is frequently at the book. If you say, "I love Milton with all my heart," I ask, Do you love him with all your *mind*, too? "Not a syllable of him have I read lately." Then, you don't love him. For to love the works of an author with all your heart and mind, you must meditate upon them, copy them, go over them again and again, until at last they become like this Book, to those who study it. But, how many psalms can your tongue say? What sweet bread of God have you laid by from the study of this Book? What water of life have you drawn from it? This is what I call loving a book with your mind.

These things I hope may render somewhat clear to you what it is to love God with the mind. It is to search for Him thoughtfully, carefully, wheresoever He has shown Himself. And there be three Great Books of God which you must study, if you are to love Him with your mind—namely, Nature, History, and the Holy Scriptures. According to a man's intensity of love, will he study all three volumes. I don't say that he need be profound in

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science; but to know God with the mind is to know something of His ways in nature—to know some little of astronomy, the rising of the sun, the changes of the moon, the office of storms, the nature of earthquakes, and so on.

Nor would this be unprofitable knowledge. It is always a pleasure to the man thus educated to trace the doings of God in nature. If I see the stormy sea, I know it is the work of God. When I see the waves rise high, I know they rise high for purifying, and that by this process, what we have made foul shall be turned to pureness. Whoso has learned that much of God, understands that the stormy sea ministers to God's will; that the thunder before which the foolish quake, and the lightning before which they may do well to fear, are charming; that they add to man's health, and to nature's beauty, purifying the air and refreshing the parched fields; that the air is thus purged by the fire of God, burning what is noxious and destructive, and cleansing the world for God and for man. This loving God with the mind, is profitable unto all things. For when a man with upward eye looks upon the storms of life, he will see that they, too, purify him, cleanse him from sin, ambition, envy, and hate, and bring him unto that sweetness of

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soul which alone can come through the thorough cleansing of the "temple of God."

I have known people love God with the heart, and yet talk as if the works of God were not worth studying. What is the use, they say, of studying God in His works? Ah! he who loves a woman well, loves the very trinkets she wears. Whoso loves a man well, loves every hair of his head. All, everything, even the smallest thing, is glowing with preciousness, and is made glorious by the deep love of the heart. For a man, therefore, on the plea of loving God with his heart, not to love Him with his mind, is to offer but a part. Who are you, that you should look upon nature in her beauty, and behold the green fields and the trees, every leaf of which is full of the life of God, every blade of grass a passing mystery, a consummate divineness—who are you that you should turn from that volume and say, "I love God with my heart, and not with my mind?"

There is no excuse for you if you know nothing about nature. Do you say you have no time for these things? One flower from your table, if you will study it, will be more than a garden; one rose is worth more attention than all your furniture. No time? You can find plenty of time to study

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your own foolish garments; and have you no time to study the garments of God? Whoso shall watch the sun, and ask a few questions about his rising shall find that that one hour of study shall make him more instructed than before in regard to the great works of God. Therefore, a part of loving God with the mind is to study God's works. It is not "necessary to salvation," as it is called, but it is necessary to large love; for God is not loved with the mind by stupid people.

Those of you who have passed a month without reading a book, have not loved God with your mind. You have read the Bible, you say. Yes, but not much of it; and what you have read you have not read with much intelligence. It is marvellous with how little intelligence some people will read the Bible. If you have not studied the difference between loving God with all your heart and loving Him with all your mind, then you have not read *that* passage with your mind yet. Now, no amount of mysticism, enthusiasm, or rapture, can absolve a man from loving God with his mind, by a faithful, diligent study of His works.

Now we will close that volume, and open a second. You recollect the frequent calls that were made upon the Jewish people to remember their

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history, and the history of their forefathers. Now, David pours out a rapturous psalm, and tells of how the Philistines were divided and the ark of God brought home. Later on, some prophet takes up the glorious strain, and contrasts their condition now, with the miseries that came when they went a-whoring after false gods. And then there is Stephen, and he, too, begins from the beginning, and tells again the story of God's dealings with the people. All those men loved God with their mind; they studied His judgments, and His wonderful doings among the children of men. They knew that if they were ignorant of history, they could not love God with their minds. But what do you know of history? Here and there a scrap, perhaps, and that is about all. If one were to put you through your facings, you would come off badly, some of you. Ah! then, you "haven't studied sufficiently." But *why* haven't you? You should be able to mark out to your child all the shining way of God; the old Pagan beginnings of this land, the slow spread of the Divine Word, the preaching of Augustine, the studies of Wycliffe, until you come down to this year of Christ. He who studies these things, loves God with his mind.

I am not blaming you for not knowing things,

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but for not *trying* to know them. I am asking you about the present state of your love; whether you know more this day than you did twelve months back; or whether you love God with your heart and soul only, and not with your mind? You may say, "I have a great love for Tennyson;" but if you do not study him, if you don't know more of him all this time, then, I say, sit down; your plea is not acknowledged; your claim is not allowed. What shall I say, then, in regard to your professed love of God? You say you love God with your mind, only you do not *use* your mind upon the love of God. So it is the *phrase* you have, and not the thing!

These written words of men through whose minds the Holy Spirit has passed, what are they to you? How much do you understand? You have only to visit some families, and hear them give out a morsel of the New Testament to the children and servants, or a piece of history, unexplored and unexplained (and very profitless it is), to see with what little intelligence they read this Book. Now, he who loves God with his mind, when he reads this Book, goes deep into it, traces its passages, and takes up the question of what men thought about God in the early history of the

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world, from the days of the Patriarchs down to the time when the Holy One sat by the well and said, "The day cometh, and now is, when neither in this mountain shall men worship, nor yet at Jerusalem; but the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Men shall worship Him anywhere, because they will worship Him in spirit and in truth." The lover of God with the mind, then, understands Scripture, for its meaning is made more and more clear to him, by the increasing light shed upon it by study.

The result of all this is to show that ignorance is a sin. Whatsoever you could have done, and have not done, is an omission of your duty. The time will come when people will talk about ignorance as they talk about a hump-back, a deformity. You never had a prize, perhaps, when you went to school. What then? You need not remain ignorant all your life. Peter, the fisherman, learned to love Christ with his mind, as well as with his heart. And look at the sweet love of St. John. Those men loved their Lord with all their heart and soul, *and mind.* It is my painful duty to tell you that your ignorance is a sin. Your "opportunities have been so scant," you say. Well, for that you are to be pitied; but I must blame you if you have not

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used even the scant opportunities you have had. Is not history full of examples of men who have become noble and wise, whose opportunities had been far more scant than yours? Look at that shepherd boy upon the Scottish mountains, lying upon his back there, measuring the distance of the stars by a piece of string stretched upon two bits of stick.* Look at that boy, sitting upon the staircase, that he might read the words of wisdom by the common light. And read how, sitting out there in the bitter cold, reading by that borrowed light, he grew noble, and at length learned, and ultimately famous.† You were never so hard up as that. How shall you be guiltless, then, if you are

* James Ferguson. "I used to stretch," says he, "a thread with small beads on it, at arm's length, between my eye and the stars, sliding the beads upon it till they hid such and such stars from my eye, in order to take their apparent distances from one another; and then, laying the thread down on a paper, I marked the stars thereon by the beads." —CRAIK'S "Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties."

† Pope Adrian VI. was the son of a poor bargeman of Utrecht. While attending gratuitous classes at Louvaine he was unable to afford himself candles whereby to study at night. But he did not on that account spend his time in idleness. He used to take his station, we are told, with his book in his hand, in the church porches, or at the corners of the streets, where lamps were generally kept burning, and to read by their light.—CRAIK.

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more ignorant than many people who have not had your advantages? Nine-tenths of what you are pleased to call your "afflictions," are nothing but a necessary and proper whipping for your faults. So, again, the larger part of your ignorance is your own crime. You *ought not* to be a dunce. And yet, if you squinted with one eye it would cause more suffering to your vanity, than if all the works of God were utterly unknown to you.

It is time that men and women knew that God cannot be loved with the mind, except that mind be thoughtfully and studiously engaged touching the word, and works, and ways of God. There be three volumes which a man must read often in order to love God with the mind. He must read the works of God, the ways of God, and the word of God. His works are around you; His ways are in your own life, and in the deeds of your fathers; His word is here and also wheresoever a holy soul continues to show man the marvellous mercies of God. Now, making all allowance for your scant opportunities, and so on, I say this, there can be no deep love of God, except you give your brain to it, except you give your thoughts to it, except you love Him with your mind. So may you this night make this resolve,—Thou, O Lord, shalt not

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if I can help it, fashion or frame one single thing that I will not strive to know. Thy sweet varied word, here glowing with gentle beauty, and there storming with a noble wrath, shall be studied by me, until at last I open the Book of Psalms and read, "O Lord, how I love Thy Law: it is my meditation day and night. Thy testimonies are as food unto me: in them is my joy." Then shall you understand that wisdom is better than rubies, and knowledge sweeter than honey. Then, being charitable, you shall love God with your heart; then, being enthusiastic, you shall love God with a passionate soul; then, being intelligent, you shall love God with an inquiring mind. Then, this three-fold cord, not easily broken, shall be for you, and you shall keep this first and great commandment, to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

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ADVANTAGES OF STUDYING THE THREE BOOKS.

Morning, July 23rd, 1876.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."—LUKE x. 27.*

I SHALL ask you to consider again this morning what it is to love God with the mind.

"Putting your heart into unpleasant duties" is quite possible; but it is a secret which comes late. It is often late in life before a man can say, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." He begins with statutes (and who can fall in love with statutes?), and, by degrees,

* This discourse resumes and continues the last, and the reader must expect a little recapitulation; but the repeated thought is always differently clothed, and it would have been a loss to suppress it.

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through putting his mind into it, his heart begins to glow, and that which was a stony table becomes at last a song. But a man must not ask for that in the morning of life. It is afternoon wisdom; evening glory. If you can seldom put your heart in it, therefore, put your mind in it, till by-and-by you learn to love it. Where the heart is in it, the fingers grow nimble, and the brain is quickened.

Christ claims that God is to be loved with all our nature. They who love God, then, with the heart only, do sin. You are to love God with all your mind, with all your brain, and thought, and power; with reason and with argument; with learning and knowledge. No pretence that you love God with your heart, absolves you from loving Him with your mind—your soul and mind, in communion. Did it ever strike you that being ignorant is disservice to God; so much withdrawn from the Almighty? To the degree that you refuse to love the sublime study of nature; to that degree I have no pity for your ignorance. It is a failure in your service; a coldness in your love to God.

To some of you, I expect it will be a new light in which to view this question, that a Christian man should be bound to be a learned man. But the wonders of folly are done with; from around

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the foolish man the halo is departed. There was that poor boy, who, with his piece of string and his beads, studied Venus and Saturn, and mapped the relative positions of the stars. That boy was very fervent, and pious; he was giving his mind to it; and the string and the beads—ah! they did their work, they sufficed. Therefore, all pleas about "opportunities" are of no account. If your knife is blunt, you must put on more force. If you have but a few minutes in which to do a thing, you must put more steam on. Of all whimpering, "I have had such small opportunities" is the most feeble and inexcusable. The time has come when we must utterly refuse to pity people for their ignorance.

If you love God with all your mind, you will do what you do when you love a great author. You may say, "Of all authors, I think Shakespeare is the greatest; but I have never read one of his plays, never studied one of his sonnets." Indeed! What do you do, then, to show your love to Shakespeare? "Oh, I *talk* about him." He who loves an author well, turns his pages again and again; weighs his words, and marks their construction. If he reads the "Merchant of Venice," he studies it attentively, and proposes to himself to go back to his labour of love again and again. I don't know who is your

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darling; but I know it is the author with whom you are most familiar. And that is what loving God with all your mind is. You must love the actions that He has done. The three great volumes of God which you should study, are before every one of you. There is the splendid volume of Nature; that book over which the great Hebrew writer says, God looked while He rested from His labours, not with the rest of weariness, but with the drawing back of an artist, when the last stroke is struck—looked at it and saw that it was good. They who love God with all their mind, will, as time suffers them, read that great volume of Nature through and through.

The study of science is one of the ways of loving God with your mind. The study of the sciences of the geologist and the physiologist will help you so to love God. All libraries, all learning, all science, all skill, are aids to loving God. If a man looks upon a tree as merely something inanimate, that man is not loving God with all his mind. The instructed man beholds in it blood, pulse, and life; and he knows that that tree has a relationship to all things; that there is only One Spirit in the world, that all things are one, one only, one ever and the same.

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This afternoon, if you will take down some book about nature, and study it, you will be learning to love God with all your mind. "But I should not study science on Sunday, should I?" Yes, if I had time, I should. For I should be looking upon the works of God, and looking upon them with love.

And History, the whole of history, is a volume full of the love of God. It should be constantly opened. To read of all the great men who have benefited the world, will help you to love God with your mind. It is this miserable way of saying, "I should like to know these things, but——" Well, *know* them, then. If you are ignorant, there is no excuse for you.

And we will call this Bible the third volume. For though we recognize all Scriptures, nevertheless, because this book does, more clearly than any other book, affirm the presence of God, as the guide of man's story, we give this Book a place—not putting it altogether in the place of Nature, or in the place of History—but we give it a place of its own, as the companion of man when his heart and eyes are most fixed upon God. It is full of the defects and immoralities of patriarchs, kings, and others; but it is also full of the communicated glories of the Lord God, whom these people served.

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The love of God with the mind will make you consider whether you ought not to give as much time to the fringes of the garment of God as to your own garments; whether or no half as much time has been given to these marvellous things about God, as has been given to the small beer of which the larger part of what people are pleased to call "conversation" is composed.

Now, not only is it a duty of the lover of God to be conversant with the works of God; but to keep the garden of the soul free from weeds. The day will come when ignorance upon all these things will be looked upon as worse than disease; when it will be looked upon as a crime, and we shall hear of "the trial of a man for being ignorant," or of "a woman for being silly." What a trial it would be for you, if this were put into force! Fancy you being charged with ignorance, and the evidence being taken!—and the verdict being pronounced "that this stupid person be sent to hard labour forthwith."

Our hand is put to that plough, and shall never be brought back. For this insistance is a question of morals also, as well as religious duty. Loving God with all your mind, then, is to love Him with your brain and thoughts. To say you love Him with

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your heart, is nonsense, except you love Him also with your mind. If I were to publish a book, and you would not buy it, or read it, you would not be loving me with all your mind. If you love an author, you will not have the titles of his works labelled upon wooden backs, and put upon your shelves. No, no; you will get the *works*, and read them through; every page, every line, every word.

And now, why this insistance? Because loving God with the mind is the strengthening of the mind, and the finest process of weeding. It will lift conversation into something worth hearing, instead of its falling into commonplace gossip, scandal-mongering, and pitiful chronicling of petty things. When the higher culture of the mind is neglected; when knowledge is looked upon as a very good thing to have, but not to be sought after; then be you sure there will be plenty of weeds. "My son, get wisdom, get understanding; cry after knowledge, and lift up thy voice for understanding. Seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures!" This was the passionate cry of the wise man of old time.

Remember, for your encouragement, that every duty mastered, every map studied, every bit of knowledge gained, is a weed rooted up. The tree

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of knowledge is like the cedar; it is not friendly to frivolity. It is an evergreen, beneath which frivolity can have no place. The chief weeds that are fatal to it are these—littleness, and the ability to talk a long time on the head of a pin. It is not little to learn about a pin, for one may talk scientifically a long time about such a thing. But it is the frivolous talking about nothing, the littleness, the envy, the jealousy, the spite, the gossip, the scandal, the backbiting tweedle-twaddle, in which so many people indulge, that I am speaking of. These are the weeds for which there is no possible growth, when a man learns to love God with all his mind. He who has got to that state, cares little for the scandal of the streets.

There is that weed, Envy. Who could be envious who hath God for his lover? Envy! There is that person has so many hundreds a year. Well, what of that? I have the seven stars, Plato's brain, Isaiah's prophecies, David's Psalms, and the Lord Jesus Christ his heart. With such possessions, I have no time to be envious. And jealousy! who has time for that nonsense, whose heart is filled with heavenly love, who holds communion with the mighty dead, whose room is peopled with the great masters of all time who, though dead,

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yet speak? And what have I seen? I have seen nights such as one this week—when God's beauty was poured forth to all men; when the heavens shone with the glory of an archangel's wing; when the splendour of all things seemed to be gathered in the clouds in one marvel of glorious beauty; and I beheld—what?—two or three people turn their backs to it, and proceed to chronicle some foolish gossip. The lover of God would be filled with a glowing enthusiasm as he gazed upon this passionate outpouring of the glory of God; but these stupid people, in their sullenness of heart, turned round to talk the gossip of some filthy court, and relate some narrative of some filthy harlot. What weeds! And even the fire of God could not arrest their attention! Even the bushes seemed to take fire, and yet no fire of God stirred in their hearts. They stood with their backs to that splendour, whilst it seemed at that moment that the Lord had rended the heavens, that the children of men might, just for a moment, behold His glory. So every one of you can turn from these continual dissertations of God, to envy, spite, malice, and evil-speaking!

If it is too late for you to mend, there is your child. Oh! think of the child. Fill the little child's mind with something higher. I have never

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known a little child yet, who had been brought up to have a large and thorough love of nature, who was not saved from the nastiest things that beset human nature. Made to know the language of the flowers ; filled full of the passionate love of nature, acquainted with the cataract, and with the shady forest ; knowing the rising of the sun, and the age of the moon ; I say that child is *armed*, not against strong passions, perhaps, but certainly against the creeping things of life.

To love God with all one's mind is the greatest protection against pettiness, littleness, and stinging spite. Knowledge is a fine insect powder ; very good against human flies, that bite and sting ; against the mosquitoes of rage and wrath. The finest insect-powder is knowledge and the love of it, and the study of God's works and ways. So I find culture to be a holy regimen, a godly diet ; and the last and best expression of man as an intellectual being is that he loves his God with all his mind. The love of God with the mind brings enthusiasm and admiration of God's works and ways. A good man increases his knowledge daily. He will master day by day some new line, as he would from some favourite poet, till he comes to the full fruition of all.

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I have spoken strongly; but years have taught one that there is nothing like knowledge to guard against meanness, and that little things will hardly live by the side of these great ones. These tall trees of God are protectives against all noxious weeds. Remember the garden of the sluggard, what a plight it was in! And I, who garden in other gardens than that, know that in the garden of those who study not, no cedar of Lebanon shall grow, no rose of Sharon; nothing but the thistle and the dock, and other such poor pestilent weeds. For it is by man's industry only that the garden of the mind can be made to flourish; as God put Adam in the garden of Eden, to keep it in order.

Now, you will have drawn your own conclusion as to what it is to love God with the mind. I need not again remind you that it is possible to love God with the heart, and not with the mind; and, alas! it is possible to love Him with the mind, and not with the heart. But, thank God, it is also possible, that, because I love Him with all my mind, I may come at last to love Him with my heart and soul, too. What I plead for is what Christ pleaded for. No man can be thoroughly enamoured of God's works, and not become lowly, humble, and wise of heart. A good man, then,

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should be a learned man, a thoroughly instructed man in the three great volumes of God. Then shall he keep the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." And who shall separate what the Lord Christ hath joined? Listen again. "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

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NATURAL KNOWLEDGE FOR CHILDREN.

Morning, May 21st, 1876.

"The Lord shall rejoice in His works."—PSALM civ. 31.

IT is an acknowledged mark of graciousness that a guest shall show his consciousness of the festival by the joy (in appearance, at least) that he wears, for it is human nature to require that the wedding-garment shall be worn by those who sit at the wedding-feast. And God hath the same right to ask that, when by the breath of the west wind He decks the earth with beauty, man shall at least rise as far as possible to the occasion, and put away that dreary dulness which usually characterizes the British people in regard to the attractions of nature. If possible, one should set aside the mourner's face and hush the cry of the sad heart

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when the "oil of gladness" is brought forth by God. For I doubt not it must have struck you that one gets very little out of one's religion, if it never seems to beautify one outwardly or inwardly. It seems to be perpetual Lent with most religious people; and I know few who recognize the divine duty of being cheerful and of promoting joyfulness and mirth in others. Ask some of these people what they suppose God was thinking about when He made the monkey, or when he put that quaint little house upon the snail's back, that it might carry its habitation whithersoever it went! Read them that Song of Solomon, if you dare—that great-hearted, hot-blooded, passionate love-song, that song of songs—and they will shrink and shudder, and doubt and fret, and wonder whether these things have anything to do with "religion" or not. The consequence is, their religion does very little to give them joy.

When I was a child this "religion" was my spectre, my terror; for it came with a chill hand and put out all the joy and bloom of life for me. Too often, in manhood, we think of it as a question of judgment. Granted that it is, yet remember that one of the primary objects of revealed religion is that the life of man may run in beauty, through

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living out all that he preaches. But too often one is obliged to go amongst sinners, in order to know what true manhood is. It is dull company to be with the saints; for they mostly seem to have gotten very little out of their religion, and they seldom deviate into joy. But why should the children of a King go mourning all their days? He who wrote that song of the world to the Divine Master said, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice."

Now, this want of laughing—this fear of being joyful, is a melancholy method of praise. It is ungrateful to God. I would rather dance like David, than sit still like some Christians. I remember being in a church once in America. They certainly had a warm church, and that was pleasant; but, in one sense, it was a fine ice-house, for nobody seemed to feel any joy. When we came out, I was asked what I thought of the service. I said that if some negro had come in and howled out an Allelujah, it would have been a joy; but nobody had shown anything except conceit—it was all intellectualism. It is very amusing sometimes to watch religious people. How difficult it is to bring them to book about joy and mirth! Possibly God blesses joy and mirth, they think;

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but they put them aside as things that belong to the debatable land. Now, you and I have been looking into this question—whether we should give our sanction to the doing of anything, or getting profit from anything which, either in principle or in practice, we are in doubt about, as to its being abstractly right or wrong. So it is with mirth and joy. Is it right or wrong to be mirthful? If right, then, in God's name, why look always with such a sad and serious face upon the things of life?

Much of this drab, east-winded sort of religion comes from following the New Testament too closely, as though its grand rules and laws were meant to be explanations or pictures of the whole of human life, instead of being, as they are, special rules for special matters and special times. Of course it has struck you what a difference there is between the Old Testament and the New. When I was a boy, I never heard anything about the joy of God in his works. One might as well have lived in a shop, for all I knew about the God of nature. The Old Testament spreads over centuries. The human race had had leisure to write it, and therefore put into it what the writers of the New Testament could not do. The New Testament had one work to do—to open the gate of mercy

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to all mankind, and to break down the middle wall of partition between all tribes and nations. It had no time or occasion to attend to aught else, and so had little to do with mirth and joy. So religious people are in doubt whether or not these are things fit for fallen men. It is clear to them that apples belonged to the sinless; but, having been taken by the sinful, they doubt whether they have any longer a right to enjoy them.

Now, do deliver your child from this sort of thing. Let the little child learn from the beginning that the dear God is a God of mirth. Tell him of how God made the little bird, and gave its little brain the divine mathematics by which it makes its wondrous nest so secure and so strong against the wind. And then, when the little nest is ready, the eggs are laid, and by-and-by the young birds are hatched. Then there is the rearing and feeding of the little brood (and in that may be seen a lesson of devotion which men and women would do well to copy). So the child may be taught to behold the dear God in these things. If children were brought up in that, instead of in things that don't concern them—catechisms about damnation and other succulent things for babes—it would be much better for them. At least they would be brought

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up to understand that the Lord rejoices, and shall rejoice, in his works. Let me plead for your children. It is pitiful to me to see how, in this town, children grow up, oh! so ignorant of the works of God—unable to understand anything of the marvel and mystery of the great "River of God." It is to me ungrateful that the dear God should have spread so abundant a feast, and these children should have no wedding-garment on.

It has been well said that "The works of the Lord are *sought out* by those that take pleasure in them." If the stars were to appear only once in a thousand years, how mankind would date from it and talk of it! If the moon were to shine forth only once in your lifetime, what a night it would be! How it would go into the calendar! How you would stand at the street corners to talk of how Heaven had been opened, and a gleam of the glory of Heaven had shown forth! But, because these things happen almost every night, they are not "sought out" by man. Instead of being amazed at the prodigal wealth of God, and with hearts full of thankfulness crying out, "The earth is full of Thy riches: O Lord, how bountiful are all Thy works!" we pass them by with indifference. Now, I say distinctly that a very large part of the

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religion of a little child should consist in the loving admiration and intelligent understanding of the works of God in nature.

A child should not only be taught to love them, but to understand them; for he does scant justice to the works of God who simply takes them as an appearance or show. That is one of the glories of nature, no doubt; but the "second thoughts," that come from "searching out" the works of God, are what are needed in order truly to understand them. For, to them who understand the great office of nature, all is spirit, showing itself in a material form; everything that the eye of man beholds, pre-existed in the mind of God as a joy, a wish, a delight.

Therefore, it is wise that the little child should very early be taught that the only way in which man can know the mind of God is through his works; that night and day, river and sea, calm and storm, earthquake and volcano, beast and bird, acid and alkali, bone and blood and muscle—all once were necessarily ideas in the mind of God; that they are what they are by virtue of a preceding affection in God. Whatsoever I behold is a thought of God, handed to me in the only way in which I could understand it. The stone tells tales of

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Him, the blue egg of the bird, the nightingale's song, the foam of the sea; the snail and its shell; all things in nature speak to me of God. And, if I love the Eternal Lover as the Eternal Lover should be loved, I take up any one of these little things and kiss it reverently, and say, "It is Thine, O God, and it was once Thy thought." I try to catch what it was that God intended.

To me, nothing is common or unclean. All that has now passed away had once its meaning and its use. The lion and the bear, the wolf and the spotted tiger; each have their meaning, each have their day, and pass away. So I come to understand that, almost in a material sense, "the child shall put his hand upon the cockatrice's den, and that the calf and the young lion shall lie down together, and a little child shall lead them." So it shall be that the soft and gentle spirit of the Child shall one day lead away the tigers and lions of the world; the gentleness of Christ, which is the gentleness of God, shall one day put away all those "terrible things in righteousness." Having done their work, the days of the world shall pass away, in order that the sweet and blessed days of God's peace may come.

So, let not your child call anything common or

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unclean. It is a shame to see a little child afraid of anything; yet, how often we see women teaching their children to shriek at a frog or a spider! The wise man kills the tiger and the lion; for, though they may have been necessary in the early development of the world, they are done with now, and must pass away; and the child should be taught that these are some of the creatures of a primal time, which should be fought and overcome. But the little child should be taught to put a spider upon his hand, to look into the bright eyes of a frog, and to watch the glorious colours of the toad without shrinking. And, as he gets older, he should be able to look upon human blood, to appreciate the glory of the knife which lays open the splendours of the human body, and, instead of shrinking from what is within, he should be taught to sing out with all his might and soul, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." When he learns all about the bones and muscles of the human body, and the skin with its seven million pores—all these things should be charming to him—beautiful, until his enraptured eye should know at last that there is nothing in this world unclean except man's uncleanness; nothing unclean except when the children of God lose themselves in the mean things

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of the lower life. The little child then should be brought up early without fear and without trembling, and should be taught from the beginning that whatsoever he beholds is but the outward representation of what was in the mind of God—that everything that is visible was once an invisible thought of God. For as the master of the house being out, I look around his room and judge of him by what is there, so do I judge the Great Artist, Who is the master of all things, by what I see around me.

Then I go forward, and am glad to know that "the Lord rejoices in His works." What a wonderful sentence that is! That man must have been inspired when he said that God rested from His labours, and looked upon His works and pronounced them good. Of all joys, that is the grandest and sublimest—to review one's own work, and pronounce it good. There is no passage in English much more beautiful than that which describes the author of that great work on Falling Rome,* when he had just come to the conclusion of his task. Walking there under the trees of Lausanne, he, like a true artist, drew back and admired his finished work.

* Gibbon.

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And he was right. For there are times when a man may look upon his work and say, "That is genius!" When Swift was beginning to doat, he took down from a shelf one of his own works, and exclaimed, "Good God! what a genius I must have had when I did that!" So, when I have done my best, I will think much of it. If it is good, I will vindicate it. One great artist, having put the last stroke of his genius to a wondrous piece of statuary, threw down his hammer, "And now," said he "speak!" True, the marble could not do it, but he had done all that could be done to make it life-like. From these things we learn what is meant by the joy of God in his works. That man who wrote the Book of Genesis, no doubt put *his* pen down with a "Well done!" from the joy that he felt in having completed his work. And so he speaks of God and says that He "rested from His labours, and saw that it was good."

If, then, all these things around me were once a thought of God, and God rejoices in His works, shall not I, by my beaming smile, answering to His smile, show that I, too, rejoice in the beauty of the works of the Lord, and that my soul hath reverently sought them out?

Just think what a large Bible you have got.

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Instead of being confined to the Old Testament, what a Bible God has given you, if you will but use it! Even from one neat little bird's-nest, what homely lessons may be drawn! And from one of those little feathered birds, what a lesson of God we may learn, until the wisest man shall be perplexed! Or, take up a bee-hive, and just show your child the marvellous wonders of those little creatures. And many a lesson may be taught from *them!*

In nature's progress, what is to come next sheds glory upon the lower step. Everywhere in nature there is that law, that every step is glorified a little by the increasing splendour of that which is above it. And as it rises to man, and from man to God, it prophesies of that which is to come. Go to the ant, the bee, and many other creatures, and you will find that the coming glory of man is shed upon them. For these creatures have their soldiers and their guards, their pomps and splendours, their economies and exchanges, and their transports. All things begin to dawn in these wondrous creatures. The little child should be fascinated with them, should hear a sermon in the buzzing bee, and catch the voice of God in every flower that blows. Go out with him in the evening,

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and let him touch the bee-hive, when immediately he shall see two sentinels come out to see what it is that endangers their city; then, when satisfied that all is well, they will return again to take up the position of nightly watchers. All these things, to the instructed man, make this world a perpetual benediction, an eternal teaching, a constant psalm to God.

We plead, then, for the children. We would have you give your children very little catechism, and not much doctrine, at present—there is a time for everything. Some religious people are as cruel to children as though they had got the work of men to do. It is hard to ask the undeveloped child to do the work of a man. The law prevents it in our factories; but, in Sunday-schools and families, little children are troubled with things that would have puzzled St. Augustine, and the little feet are made to climb the sandy hill of doctrine adown which man stumbles. "But what shall you teach your children?" Teach them that the good God, the All-Father, the Eternal Lover is a joyous God, taking pleasure in His works. "But, is it not desirable that they should know they are sinners?" Very! "And ought not you to tell them so?" They will tell *you* so soon enough. You need

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not give them your views about human depravity; for it is more important that they should give you theirs than for you to inculcate them beforehand. Experience will teach them fast enough. "But should not the child have a code of ethics to build upon?" No. You must leave it to the experience of the little conscience. When that little being was sent into the world, God knew what He was doing, and He will not ask from it more than the child can give.

Do you want to teach your child the works of God? Then take him out, and let him search these things out for himself. For I have found that the power of experience is everything in the instruction of children. All that they learn about what we call nature is treasured up by the child as latent heat against dull days, as light against dark hours. The love of God in nature is a charm from meanness, saves the youth from folly and sin, keeps him in the path of virtue. I never knew a man go utterly astray who loved the works of God thoroughly. The passionate love of flowers even will do much to keep him innocent and pure.

What do you do with your children all Sunday? "Oh!" some of you say, "I am so exhausted with

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the labours of the week, that I don't want to be troubled with the children on Sundays; I want to rest." Well, for those of you who *must* labour like this, I am sorry indeed; but for those who labour more than they need, and neglect their children's highest good, I am sorriest of all. Would they like to be called into judgment by the All-Father and Lover of the little ones? Give your child, then, some little instruction about the works of God. Not in puzzling over some dry scientific work on Botany; not in teaching him the hard grammar of it; but take him out into nature, and talk to him in this wise: "The rejoicing God has sent this to you as an expression of His thoughts, and to tell you what He meant about certain things."

The child will ask you questions, and you must answer them as best you can. It is no use shirking it; though the wisest men have been puzzled to know what to do with the questions of a child. But there is one thing you must do. You must always be honest with the child. If you don't know a thing, say you don't. He treats a child the best who lowers himself to the child, and who, when the child puts a question to him which he cannot answer, says, "I cannot tell you, my child, for there are many things I do not know. And I,

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too, my boy, I put questions to which I cannot get answers. But I know enough to feed you and to care for you." It is your duty, however, to explain to them all that you can. Children don't take much damage from anything they can understand, and you ought to be able to give such answers to your children. I wonder sometimes why some people dared to marry or to have children at all, they show such utter inability to answer their questions.

Now, remember, it is as much your duty to go from business out into nature that the little child may be fed with the bread of the soul, as it is to go to the warehouse in order that bread for the body may be brought in. But how many do it? Did women every day learn some new thing about nature in order to teach it to the child, what children we should grow some day! If man and wife were to sit down every evening and discourse upon some work of God, in such a manner as that the little child might understand it and be instructed by it, what a good thing that would be! If the child asks, Why is the flower spotted? tell him of the marvels of light. All these things will lead the child to comprehend the presence of God in nature in the only way in which he can be led to

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comprehend it; and his mind will understand that these are the methods by which the moods of His soul are communicated unto us.

This bright morning we put in a plea for the children. The child should be taught very early to walk through this world with eyes never blinded, calling nothing common or unclean. He should know the works of God as a gentleman knows the works of the old masters. And, just as some of us would be ashamed to say that there are pictures of the old masters which we do not know, so it should be a shame to us not to know the works of God.

Surely the works of the Great Artist should be sought out by all them that have pleasure therein. Now, to get pleasure therein, one must seek them out, and the surest way of being fascinated into the study of them is to look upon every visible thing as an expression of the thought, mind, will, and intention of God. Therefore, each thing tells me something of the words of God—something that He is thinking about. So, through His works, we may rise into communion with the Father of all, and then we shall understand the words of the Apostle, "By the things that are seen, the hidden things of God are known."

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CHRIST FULFILS MOSES.

August 9th, 1874.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."—MATTHEW v. 17, 18.

IN these words of our Lord a danger is suggested, (hence the warning is given); and the danger was that men should think Christ came to bring a new Religion into the world in the light of which the Religion of Moses, of David, of Isaiah should pass away. How that danger arose it is not difficult for us to understand. As the Jews ceased to be strong as a nation, after they had tasted the bitterness of captivity and known the sadness of bondage; as the Restoration failed to bring them back the ancient glory or the former strength; as the Roman had come, and the tax-gatherer of Cæsar walked in

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high places ; as the Temple no longer had its ancient lustre, the people no longer its former strength,—men might naturally conclude that the Religion which gave the law and had spoken by the prophets was waning to its death.

The Jews themselves were much to be blamed, in that they had confused at times their peculiar law, or polity, or social, or natural state, with the eternal principles of righteousness, justice, and truth, which never can change. One of the evils for which Christ rebuked them was that constant identification of themselves with the whole family of God—the mixture of privileges of the hour and the peculiarities of a small nation with the eternal things of righteousness and of truth. And therefore, having made these mistakes, they, naturally also, when they watched their failing economy and their weakening nation, would suppose that the religion of their fathers was passing too. Now, Christ declares that he came not to abrogate the old religion : and it might be useful if those of you who are students of the Bible, instead of mere professors of reverence for it, would see exactly what Christ did not do away with and yet which was done away with, and what remained in his teaching and yet was abolished in Christian

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practice. For if he says that not one jot or tittle shall pass away until all be fulfilled, and certain things did pass away, we are justified in supposing those things were not of the law, and not of the prophets ; they were not essential things, they were temporary ; they were some mere vessel in which eternal things were for the time held ; and then they passed away, and in passing away left all that was precious, essential in religion, unaltered and untouched.

It is desirable that you and I should see that there are not two religions, the Jewish and the Christian. There may be two economies, there may be two rituals, two ceremonials, there may be two languages, but not two humanities ; and great men have oftentimes done unwisely in making such a wide gulf between the two religions. If religion consists in those offered sacrifices, if it consists in circumcision, or in other Hebrew peculiarities, then of course the religion of the Jew is not the religion of the Christian ; but if the religion of the Jew—all that deserves the name of religion—was to keep God's commandments, to love justice, to walk uprightly, to be obedient, then there is but one true religion—the religion of Moses, the religion of Christ. Now, in reading the Old Testament—it is

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very desirable it should be read, to see what there is in it—from the beginning to the end it tells but one tale, and alters never. For the great worth of the Old Testament to us is not, after all, that it affects to give us a cosmogony, or to give us the history of Hebrew kings; its chief value is this, that it is the testimony borne for centuries to this one great truth of religion, that God is on the side of righteousness, and the true life in this world and the next is the result of righteousness and of nothing else. Therefore in reading it the chief object of the student should be to listen to the words of all these wise men, to watch how deep a faith was held by the pious Hebrew, to see how often he gets puzzled, and how at times life sinks into low interpretations and poor meanings, until at last prosperity comes to be identical with life, and the puzzled Patriarch or the doubting Psalmist may for a time think that this testimony of God to righteousness is failing, and that the wicked prosper and the righteous it goes hard with.

But watch again (for this is the uniform testimony) how the Jews (not because they were Jews, but because they were men of the same human nature as ourselves) suffered from that perpetual source of corruption in all religions, the attempt to

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substitute something for righteousness. As Dr. Johnson said, with his large, robust vigour and clear observation of mankind—every corruption of religion there ever had been, had for its root the attempt to substitute something in the place of righteousness. Anything and everything but the simplicities of obedience! Men dislike a religion that is easy to be understood, simple in its rules, few in its precepts, simple in its doctrines. God made men upright, but they have sought after subtle inventions. The religion that should be for the multitude—for all of us—should be simple in its rules, plain in its principles, and, if it must be hard at all, it must be hard in its practice. The gate is strait, not because it is a gate of defence, but because it is a gate of exclusion, and what it excludes is this: that a man shall pass through that gate and along the narrow way carrying with him sensuality, pride, passion, uncleanness, haughtiness of spirit. The gate is strait in order that men may carry nought which is evil; the way is hard that men may gain nought but self-competence: for a difficult road lends vigour to the traveller.

These corruptions are continually coming into religion, and they always tend to make it difficult to understand, whereas the difficulty should be in the

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practice. Also, as you notice, there is a continual confusion of means and ends going on in the human mind. Things which are only good in as far as they minister to an end, are continually endeavouring to be independent, to set up for themselves, to become ends in themselves. There was no great value in being descended from Abraham according to the flesh; there might be great value in it if it bound a man over to have Abraham's faith or to walk with his obedience to God. But, by degrees, the pedigree got substituted for the faith, and they set more store upon the accident of their birth than upon the similarity of their spirit. Christ, and Paul too, cried out perpetually against this; for what was wanted was not sonship of Abraham by flesh, but sonship by spirit. Likeness in spirit was of more importance than likeness of figure. Paul said that *he* was the true son of Abraham who had Abraham's faith.

Now, we maintain that of every book in the Bible this is the great burden, of every part of the Old Testament this is the great use, to see the experiment tried by a nation—the devoutest nation the world has ever had, the nation nearest to God of any in the old world—to see the experiment carried out, and try whether it was right and true that the

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God who made us always leaned the weight of His rule and government towards righteousness; to see that true life consisted in doing what was right, that that nation prospered as long as they suffered nothing to take the place of this, and that they became feeble and ultimately passed away as soon as they had suffered the traditions of the elders—man-made clauses and interpretations—to take the place of the old solemn covenant, which was this—to fear God and keep His commandments.

Now if it be so that the whole history of the Old Testament is just the attempt of man to depart from this or to keep near to it, that all the corruptions that came into true religion arose from their putting other things in the place of this, we will now pass into the New Testament to see whether Christ had any other aim and object. In the New Testament you find Christ lifts up the same old testimony. "They are my friends who keep my commandments; they have life who do the Father's will, not they that say Lord, Lord, but they that do the will of the Father—they who keep the commandments." This is his one uniform cry. It is true that afterwards the Church added a great deal to his words, but his words are *that* from the beginning to the end. Without obedience I know

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you not; your ceremonial, your professions, your prophecies, your pretensions, I understand not. To those who say, Haven't we prophesied in thy name and in thy name cast out devils, he says, Perhaps so, but one thing you have not done—kept the commandments; therefore, no place for you in the Kingdom of Heaven! Now, if this be so, since we read the Lord's meaning—when he says He came not to destroy the law or the prophets—to be that they taught precisely the same thing that he did, that there was a will of God that could be known, a law of God that should be kept, and that nothing whatsoever, either of profession of belief, pretence of marvel, no altar, no gift before it, could ever avail in the place of that solemn Obedience which we preach to you is religion (is the only religion towards which all other things should minister, by which all other things must be judged), therefore we protest, perhaps with wearisome iteration, against the things in which we were brought up, which tended so much to blind our eyes against the beauty of morals.

Let us say, with a wise man, Where justice is not, religion cannot be. Let us proclaim, with the law and the prophets, Unless you do right you cannot be right, nothing can save you; no imputed

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righteousness, no atonement whatsoever, can have any power to save you, except in your own soul, during your life, you are saved. And saving means in spirit much as it does in body—what is unclean must be removed, what is unhealthy must be restored, until a man can say: "Thou hast cleansed me in the secret parts." Now, that these things are needed to be preached in this country you can see, because the first question you generally ask a man is, What "views" he holds? When I meet with strangers who presume to ask questions which they have no warrant to ask, they never dream of asking which of the commandments I break or which of them I think to be binding. They put no questions about justice, but ask me about my views! They name some subject perhaps, and I say I *have* no views on the subject, whereupon I am put down as being to that degree irreligious. We know, by bitter experience, that to be a "religious" man in the language of this country is not necessarily a guarantee of honesty. Because a man has faith in ceremonial, is unctuous in expression, is loud in profession, with a keen sense of "the imputed righteousness of Christ," we know, by bitter experience, that is no warrant that he is honest, or that he will speak the truth,

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or that he will love mercy, or that he will keep his tongue from slander. These things have ceased to be a warrant for anything except to tell you what regiment a man is in of the army a man calls Religion. It is a stripe, a button, a facing.

Would you—let us put these things plainly—would you necessarily trust a professor of religion in matters of simple honesty, with regard to the signing of a bill, for instance, or taking it up after it was signed? If a man said he held such and such views, and another said he did not, would you necessarily trust the man of the doctrines? Take another case. You and I have known men of the world who make no pretence to be religious, but have an awkward habit of being exceedingly honest, and that many of those who are called religious men are not so. Is the man with the unsound views less religious than the other? If he is, then religion, as one of our divines has said, is not godliness, and the sooner men strive to be non-religious and the more they strive to be godly, the better. Watch, therefore, this unbroken testimony of both Old and New Testament to the one great doctrine that the supreme thing in this world is conduct. That is, so to do, so to live, as that in you what-

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soever things are just, of good report, fair, pure, and noble, may he found.

But whilst we understand the Lord's words to mean that he had no new morality to teach, and no new religion to offer, that he fulfilled the law and did but continue the prophets, that he was but the greatest of a brotherhood, that he was but the chief of all who had spoken of truth or for God, yet let us admit that he did do something, I do not say altogether new, but something exceedingly precious. As has been well said, he always paid his first attention not to conduct as a thing of action, but to the inward springs from which conduct came. You know it is possible, of course, that the right thing may be done in a mechanical manner. The right thing may be done in a selfish manner. The right thing may be done from terror or fear, in mechanical obedience. And these things are still obedience, but they lack that peculiarity which makes them of the highest order, which really does turn morality into religion. Hence, where Christ differed from other great teachers was this, he gave not the first great attention to conduct but to dispositions from which conduct proceeds. He produced feeling of which conduct would be the necessary result. Hence it was that he, knowing

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how largely impulse and emotion go to constitute the life of man, always demanded inward purity, that the fountain of life should be clear, that the conscience should be delicate, and thus it was that, giving his first thoughts to feelings and dispositions, he secured that the same conduct that the law and the prophets had enjoined should be continued, but that it should spring from inward sources deeper down; it should not be a question of social propriety, of national peculiarity, of enjoined obedience, but should be the result of the whole being. Hence he preached the doctrine of love, knowing this, that he who loves well will live well; he taught that God was love, because if men once felt *that* they would turn to Him; taught there was but one commandment, to love God, to love your brother, knowing that if you do so you will keep all the commandments. Therefore, let us have no long list of commandments, no tables of stone, no external things that might be done by a sleeping man or a dead man. His one great cry has been, Love much; have the spirit of love well, and all the commandments come! All that will then be required will be a little prudence to teach when to act; but if there be love in the heart all the law and the prophets will necessarily be fulfilled.

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So it was in regard to all the laws of morality which Christ gave us. The Scribes had come to make it sufficient to abstain from injuring a man. No, said Christ, you must go on to love him. "It has been said of old, love your friends, hate your enemies." That seems very fair. It is the maxim of the natural man. It would be the thing if we had been left to our own guidance. But Christ came to preach that if a man had the loving spirit of God in him he could have no enemies; for the great doctrine of Christ is, you can have no enemy if you live in love. You may have a man that does you an injury, but he is not your enemy; you will bless them that hate you, bless them that persecute you. It was to take away the possibility of a loving man having an enemy that the Blessed Lord went down so deep into the springs of life, and instead of a lecture, saying, Do this, do that, and the other, he said, Cultivate this, then you will have no enemy, because he who has injured you most is he whom you have most need to bless.

Now, therefore, we find a consistency, an harmonious relation between the two religions. We, of course, naturally give a preference to the Christian religion—not for one moment because it has a morality other than that of the Jews, but we do

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claim this, that Christ, himself a Jew, gave the world this deep-down teaching that the heart and the conscience itself, the whole spirit of a man, was that which God demanded, and which if rendered obediently and lovingly to Him would enable the man to fulfil the law and to keep the commandments. Whatever then, it seems to me, passed away, passed away because it was not of the essence of religion, and how much passed away those of you who study the history of the Jews know. The Temple passed when men needed that no longer. The meaning of the Temple was that there God could be served, or that there the people could be gathered for His service. What was peculiar and temporary about the Old Testament was that there was a nation to be formed and disciplined in order that they might be the depository of the great truth, the unity of God, that they might proclaim to the world His righteousness, and be a living witness that righteousness tends to life. The sacrifice went, the priest went; they were no longer wanted. That which Christ did not fulfil was not righteousness, but simply forms, politics, social peculiarities, national peculiarities, all of which had their uses and their day, but had in them nothing that was permanent, abiding, or eternal.

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Now, as we admit that the Jew added much to the simplicities of his religion, burdened it with observations, surrounded it with ceremony, filled it with corruptions—let us admit that Christianity has done the same, for between what has passed for Christianity and the actual teaching of Jesus Christ the difference is greater than between anything that ever passed for Judaism and the teaching of Moses. From this little Book (for the New Testament is but a little book) there has grown a whole forest of propositions, whole volumes of metaphysics, whole libraries of speculations, with amazing disquisitions about things that no man can understand, and we have come to that marvellous spectacle, presented sometimes amongst Dissenters, when boys and girls, about as ignorant as they can possibly be of everything except a few fine phrases, are admitted into what we call Church membership. They think themselves not only able to decide, but with their decision able to judge, pronounce, condemn those who hold not their views, as they call them, of doctrines that puzzled Plato, plagued St. Augustine, were too much for Calvin, over which Luther stormed, wept, prayed, and which the wisest of men had left precisely where they found them, concluding that there are

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certain facts to be observed in this world, but that the theories upon which they are based are entirely out of a man's power to discover.

There is nothing to a wise man more ludicrous, or to a sad man more pathetic, than what passes around in the case of these boys and girls. Take the case of some girl. Her age forbids and her antecedents prohibit that she should have any knowledge whatever even of the mere questionings of philosophy. Of faith, foreknowledge, and free-will she could not give you a definition if she tried, and yet you hear her ready to say that such and such a man is a heretic, and another an infidel, and another has missed the way of life, and another will go to hell, and another will be damned. Examine that phenomenon; for that she-divine is a remarkable creature as a phenomenon, and an ugly one as a visible testimony to the lying religion of this country. There is no more curious creature than a sour young woman who, by virtue of having had three hours conversation with a clergyman, or having distributed, without reading, a bundle of tracts, assumes to pronounce upon these questions of God's nature and of God's decrees, and who, instead of doing her little best to make the fountain of mercy run more loving-kindness in this world,

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spends her time and uses her mischievous tongue in making sourer and sharper the already bitter waters of theological colloquies. Of course one acknowledges her power and might. I meet with many of these creatures. I have been judged and condemned by them many times. My place in hell is well secured! I have it upon their warrant. When I come to ask a few questions about righteousness—"No, no, that is all very well, but I am sure you are not sound." Sound upon what? And then there would be some phrase rattled off the tongue with as little meaning as the larger part of the music with which they torment us; and if you tell this woman she is far from God, if weary and sad, you were to venture to tell her she has not yet come near to the portals of the Kingdom of Heaven, because she has not yet learned mercy, or meekness, or lowliness, or worship—she puts you down at once—"Ah, that is very well, you are talking of mere morality. It is of no use to me." For there are men and women in the country who say, "Righteousness is very well, but faith is better." Faith better! Nothing better than faith: but what they mean by faith is this, that they have said they believe certain things that they have not brains enough to understand.

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Now these are the things that we are obliged to protest against, in season and out of season. Christ's commandment is, Love thy God with all thy heart; love thy neighbour as thyself. It is a difficult religion. What! kill self and conquer the world's allurements, conquer the lusts of the flesh, be a self-denying man, carry the cross, speak the truth, love mercy? This is hard. But I will tell you what is easy: to read any quantity of "articles" you cannot understand, to be pleased with the rattle of them, as fools in the old times carried peas in a bladder, and were greatly charmed when they heard the pleasing sound. Have the articles translated into Greek: they will sound more, and you will understand them less!

A large part of the religion of my fellow-countrymen has just about as much to do with religion as the parcels they carry about their waists which they call charms. Charm, in the old sense, was something by the use of which an evil could be cured and conquered. That bundle of charms, nicknacks, rubbish—*that* cure anything! and this holding of doctrines about the Unknown, and chattering about them, *they* cure the soul! I would as soon believe that an old woman's garter for a wart had power to remove it out of my flesh

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as that your prating about doctrines, about which men know nothing, could have any power to cleanse your conscience, touch your heart, sweeten your temper, make pleasant your tongue. Now, my friend, I don't want your charms. If you can get any good out of them, do. If they will warm you when cold, I am thankful. If they will feed you when hungry, good. Hang around you all sorts of nicknacks, and ceremonialism, and magic, and creeds, and orthodoxies. May you get much comfort out of them, especially in the hour of death. Leave me to my nakedness, leave me but the two things—lovely, but such difficult things—these two commandments; leave me to strive that whatsoever I may know or not know, I may know this: God is love, He willeth not the death of the sinner, but would rather that we should all turn unto Him and live. Believe or not believe what you may, let me believe this: that it is hard to love one's neighbour as oneself, but that in doing so self is conquered, man is uplifted, the Divine One is glorified, and I become a part of that beautiful, marvellous system of God according to which each thing renders up itself in order that others may live. Or, as one well said, "From the Lamb that was slain down to the littlest creature that dies to-night, one

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great, sad, glorious law runs through all God's creatures, each is for the other, through the death of one there is life to the other," and if I can have part in these things then I shall be content. I don't want your "views." Some of them I had once, and I let them go. I cut the string and away they drifted, and I have had neither time nor desire to go to see whither such dross and worthlessness has gone.

So we say that by a diligent study you may see how through the whole Bible there runs one uniform testimony as to what godliness really means, that it is the doing as God would have you do, and becoming, as far as man can, what God Himself is. All the rest may be useful as the clothing, the garment, the fittings, but it is not of the essence of the business. Much of the rest is not ornamental, is of very little use, and the origin of it is the constant desire of men to substitute something for righteousness. People say this is such an easy religion. Try it. I have never found it so. Do you think because a burden has but two ropes to fasten it, it is no burden? Do you think that the application of strings, of bonds, and ropes will make weight? I have found that some bags which had the most straps had least in them. If any of

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you think we preach too easy a religion, try it for a twelvemonth. Begin to-morrow, and when you hasten to a neighbour to retail some scandal remember it is forbidden. You say, "Dear me, how hard it is." You will find it so. For where some of you err in your religion is this: you don't apply it to everything, to little things as well as to big things. It is hard, but on it hangs all the law and the prophets.

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CHRIST AND MOSES: LOVE BETTER THAN LAW.

Morning, December 19th, 1875.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us."—2 COR. v. 14.

THE Apostle Paul is here speaking in that strong, passionate way in which his great deep heart made him speak whensoever he was meditating upon what he had been and what he was now. He had begun to set forth how he had learned that what once he counted wisdom, now was foolishness to him, and *vice versâ*. The things he once prided himself upon, now he trampled underfoot, and the cross, which to him was once a sign of shame, was now a sign of glory. The things he had fought for, and persecuted others for neglecting, had now for him passed away; and he had changed masters, altered his principles, changed his aims, been born

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again, and become a new man. That others might see what he saw, he was willing to seem mad: "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us."

Now, that phrase has a deep truth in it, as such strong, passionate language ofttimes has. For ofttimes, when the heart speaks, all the other powers seem to be brought into sweet accord with it, and the voice is mostly the truest and most accurate interpreter of the heart. The mind itself becomes greatened when it sets forth the utterance of the heart. Some of you think that love and constraint ought not to be brought into company. There is a seeming harshness about the words constraint and restraint; a harshness which sounds like the clink of a chain in a prison house; a note of compulsion against which the soul rises up in rebellion. We could understand if Paul had said "law," "force," "destiny," or "Jehovah" constrains me; but this man says "*love* constrains me," and therein he set forth, in one short, sweet phrase, the whole difference of Christianity from the sublime religions which had preceded it—the religion of the Roman or the Greek. It is the substitution of the passionate obedience of lovingness for the obedience to

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will, law, destiny, or the obedience of fear. To the Christian man after Paul's own heart, the love of Christ is that which restrains or constrains.

But though the effect of it is constraint, the process is sweet, and the results are glorious; for it is the religion of loving and being devoted to one who suffered our sorrows. There is no disguising it that law, fate, destiny, or commandment may produce an exceedingly noble form of religion; that it may make a nation strong in law, and powerful in all things; but it tends always to produce a character that is hard and cold; noble, but ungeniál, ungracious. Yet the result of a clear understanding of law, and a very clear obedience to it, is never in any way to be accounted cheap. For it is better to be ungracious, and obedient, than to be gracious without obedience. It is better to be moral and undevout than to be devout and immoral. It is better to have your strength, even though clothed in raggedness as to beauty, than to have a sensuous beauty upon inward deformity and untruth.

Now, the religion of the Jews was one of the grandest and greatest the world had seen. It was a dumb obedience to the will of a holy Being, out of sight, adorable and adored; but it led on to the

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Christian faith, which, you remember, is obedience, because of love, to a visible and seen Being. For Theism and Christianity are not the same. A man shall be a theist, and worship the "unknown God;" but for a man to be a Christian, he must reverence a visible God, and regard God as "manifest in the flesh," as far as he can behold any manifestation of God, and profit by it. Did men but understand this clearly, then, instead of our profitless discussions about the being of God, it would be possible to make even a child understand that, out of the immensity of the unknown God, it is necessary to have some little circle made, something which he can understand, revere, love, adore, and worship. Therefore, it is not so much God, but God in Christ, that we love and worship. For a man may find all in Christ; enough to supply him with the whole force of his life, and to give him all the constraint and restraint which he requires. So, to us who hold these things, it is a little matter what the theologians may say about Trinities in Unities.

Standing once upon a mountain-top, I saw a thunder-storm a long way down. Between myself and the earth, in the valley beneath, there was the thunder-storm. There the lightning was flashing

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and the thunder rolling; but all was calm above. And I have long now come to stand where I can look down upon the theologians' thunder-storms—their lightnings, and clouds, and small thunder-bolts, and I find that all their discussions about these things do not affect me.

Believing, as I do, in the Incarnation—God manifested in all things, but supremely in humanity, and supremest in Christ—I believe that the manifestation which man requires in order to take the place of the old Law, is not human law, nor the worship of it; but is Divine law embodied in man. Reverencing, as Paul did, the grandeur of the Roman character, I turn with delight to the declaration of this man—that he had tried all that the law could do for him, and now had changed his master. For it is pleasant to read how thoroughly equipped Paul was. In pedigree he was perfect. His blood was of the best. In the law he was well instructed, and in the sacrifices of the law he was perfect. He was a master in Israel. And yet this is the man who subsequently counts all these things as a loss to him, that he may win Christ, and be apprehended of him. In doing this, he doubtless meditated upon the "fulness of the stature of the man Christ Jesus." Knowing that

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what humanity needs is that fulness of stature as to character, and seeing that the law—man being weak through the flesh—could do so little, this man transferred the whole powers of his heart and soul and strength to the new principle of constraining love. Then Christ became to him his leader, and the Captain of his salvation. And he soon found this advantage in the new mastership—that it brought together in one character all the virtues and graces which were so wanting before.

And how much this reconciliation and oneness is wanting in our own natures! How oft we have to mourn it! What great, grand virtues are associated with some men's weaknesses and sins! How many a man is honourable, faithful, courageous, bold, unyielding—as far as the law goes, perfect; as far as the magistrate is concerned, superfluously so—and yet that man perhaps is impure, unclean, vicious, sensual.

Thus it is possible for a man to be full of devoutness, to be perfectly "religious," as it is called, and yet to be an untruthful, covetous, greedy bargain-hunter; to be sweet in the Temple, and sour in the Exchange; to be enthusiastic in outward worship, and sneaking in daily life. One of the great evils we have to contend with is that

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such virtues should be compatible with such insufferable meanness. It is perhaps the deepest pathos of human character that this should be so, until at last we are almost ready to say with Paul, "I count all things but loss, so that I may attain to the fulness of the stature of Christ my Lord."

But if we have one thing, we scarcely expect the other. If we have heartiness and devoutness of feeling, we are ofttimes loose about honesty and careless about honour. Now, the religion of Jesus Christ is peculiarly adapted to restore all this. You know full well that the love of the heart goes out toward those graces and genialities which are not a matter of law at all. No man can be loved for keeping the commandments. He may be admired, respected, esteemed; you may give him a testimonial during his life, and erect a tomb to his memory after his death, but the mere man of law, however admirable, is always unloveable. Look at the Roman! In his great days he was strong, fearless, bold and brave; but often hard, and cruel, and savage. That splendid nation was cruelly just. We know what has been the effect of that.

But what has been the aim of Christianity? To bring all by one man to one great faith in our

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Father God, and one round sweet duty towards God and man. That is what Christianity aims at. Law can have little to do with these things. It were in vain to issue a law, bidding you to be sweet-tempered, or to love music; for the grating sounds of commandment would put an end to all sweetness. It were in vain to enjoin upon you gentleness and patience and long-suffering. These things are of the "foolishness of God;" for these are the things which the world despises. Yet without them, Christianity would be impossible. So, how often we mourn that the good man is a hard man, and the righteous man an unlovely man! How we mourn, too, over the souls, all trembling with kindness and beauty, but insensitive as to the strictnesses of honour! And how we mourn over those who are devout on the Temple steps, but dishonourable in the market or the exchange!

Now, therefore, the things that the heart goes most out to, are just those over which the law has no power—neither to enforce for reward, nor to punish for their absence. What we want, then, is to bring together truth and love, righteousness and grace, justice and mercy. We want to have everything that the great Hebrew had—his justice and

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truth and wisdom. We want all that the old Roman had — his courage and manliness and strength and fidelity to a great purpose. We want the strength and wisdom of the Hebrew, the directness of purpose and unmistakable energy of the Roman, and the love of beauty which distinguished the Greek. But when we have got all these things, we have not the fulness of the stature of Christ Jesus. All these things may exist; and yet where is the gentleness, the patience, the meekness, the lowly-mindedness, the loving-heartedness, that constitute the charm of Christ, the burden of his teaching, the motive of his life, and the end for which he came into the world?

Thus we see the comparative worth of morals and religion. It is sometimes said that they are the same thing; but they are not. A man may be exceedingly moral, and yet have nothing to do with the great principle of love. A man may act obediently; but at the same time he may be void of passion or feeling. It is folly, however, to say that he does not require any. To be sure, one can put up with almost everything, if one can have obedience. Let us have that, certainly. By all means let us make out what ought to be done, and do it. Though it be done in half rebellion, still let

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us do it. For that son who was commanded to go out, and said "I will not" and yet *went*, is far more to be preferred than he who said "I go" and *went not*. But how much better it would be if there were a third brother, who should combine a sweet affection to the father with a gracious bowing to his will! Or when that lovely lyric of obedience —"Father, I go"—rose to the young man's lips, how much better if he had then *gone*. The man or creed that shall bring *that* about is what we want—a religion that shall make us lyrical *and* obedient.

That is the religion for which that great soul sighed who said, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."* That is, I think, one of the most charming passages in the whole Bible. I have meditated upon those words for many years, and they are still beautiful to me. That was the work of Christ's life. That was what he came to teach. "My meat," he said, "is to do the will of Him that sent me." Love constrained him. So that 119th Psalm stands out there as a testament and prophecy of things to come—"Thy law is my delight." "I have loved thy commandments more than all gold." "The words of thy

* Psalm cxix. 54.

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mouth are sweeter to me than honey or the honeycomb." What is this but the passionate heart singing out to God, "Thy love constraineth me;" "Thy statutes I so love, that they have now become my songs"? Thy laws have become so sweet, that I have set them to music; what once was hard, is now my song; what once was harsh, has now become gentle; Thy rod of chastisement hath held a bud, and has outdone Aaron's rod. Constraint has budded and blossomed and has borne the sweet fruit of love, and has now become a palm-branch of admiration, a sweet Rose of Sharon. All poetic things have got into Thy law, and from Thy rod, which before seemed dead and dry, hath come life and light and joy!

The true end of religion is to have morality deep down as a basis—as a rock to uphold all graces; but above that foundation there must be all devoutness of feeling, all sweetness of mercy. Then, to us God will not be a God of force, a mighty Judge; but our Father and our Lover, our Shepherd and our Friend; slow to anger; plenteous in mercy; pitiful as an earthly father to his children. When these things are once understood, then all bondage ceases, and Paul, that strong, fierce, upright, mighty persecutor for righteousness' sake, becomes "Paul

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the aged," pleading for the fugitive slave; working at his tent-stitching, rather than become chargeable to any. For this man hath been reconciled to God; in him is "the fulness of the stature of Christ," and justice and righteousness and strictness of honour are now combined with mercy, loving-kindness, gentleness, pity, purity, and peace.

To bring, therefore, to one standard, and to put under one name, all meekness and all truth—to put them under the same banner, and make them one, this is the object of every true Christian. The aim of every good man should be to embody in himself a passionate love of what is wise and right and strong and fair and beautiful; but to add to it patience, gentleness, loving-kindness. To bring these thing together in one heart, is to bring about what Paul declares, "The love of Christ constraineth us." There is still constraint; but it is by love; there are still chains, but passionate love hath made them light; there is still the command, but now I say "I go," and obey also; for my Father's will is now my will, because He is the delight of my soul.

You and I have known what it was to obey people whom we could not love. A good many of us did not love our schoolmasters when we were

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boys. To us the schoolmaster was more the embodiment of law than of Christian love. We obeyed him sometimes; but it was with the routine of fear, and not from affection. He gave us a good character occasionally; but if he had looked into our little hearts, and seen the fear of what might come if the law was broken! For we had a pretty clear understanding of what our fate would be if we disobeyed, and we knew to our cost that "the way of transgressors is hard." Now, contrast that obedience to this constraint of which Paul speaks, which made that strong man become a little child again. Contrast that feeling with that picture of St. Christopher and the little Christ—that great big giant crossing the river Rhine with the little Christ on his shoulder—carrying him across the ferry. That is one of the most charming pictures of the middle ages.* It is curious to see that great strong, broad-shouldered man borne down to the weakness of the little child. But the love of Christ constrained him. This was not the constraint of the schoolboy, which is that of force or fear; but the constraint of love—the real, simple, passionate devotion of the heart.

* See Alban Butler's "Lives of the Saints"; or, for a short account, Chambers' "Book of Days."

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The Christian Religion, therefore, in this aspect, is the reconciliation of constraint and love. Not all the strength and nobleness of the law could ever bring out those gentle graces of the soul which Christianity has done, or make them to blossom as Aaron's rod. (The more he struck that rod against the hard rock, the more came out the waters of grace and truth!) When Paul drew on that stiff garment of the law, his whole nature seems to have taken the form of the frame. When Paul puts on Christ, the result in his life and teaching is still *constraint*—he is still *led on*, still *made* to do things—but by what? the love of Christ.

And now, when the fabric of the old theology is fast breaking, when the straw and the stubble are beginning to fall away, it is the more needful for us to know what the Christian Religion really is. If it is to live among us, it must be a religion of constraining love; living quietly whilst systems change; having no more change in it than charity has because Copernicus has gone; no more depending upon these things than upon Newton or any of the other astronomers. For what do changes of this sort seem when measured by lands and times? The sweet constraining power of the love of Christ

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can no more be shaken by these changes, books of fancies, doctrines of trinities, or any of these things, than the eternal laws of the universe were shaken when men believed that the sun was as close as it looked, and that the moon was no bigger than it appeared. Under different skies, how wonderfully one mother looks like another, as each sits with her baby on her knee! How marvellously alike, in different nations, the head bows down in reverence to Allah, Jehovah, or God! These things have never been changed by the passing away of Jupiter. So is it also with the eternal truth of these things I preach to you.

He who stands fast in the love of Christ has nothing to fear. Criticism may cause many things to crumble away, the old Temple may fall about us like the Roman empire; but that will not alter the fact that there came One into this world once who preached honour, justice, strictness of veracity, and *added* thereto — patience, gentleness, long-suffering, meekness, and mercy; who combined in himself all the virtues of a child of the law, but joined to them the religion which is expressed in that strange sweet phrase, "The love of Christ constraineth us."

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*CHRIST AND ZENO.**

Morning, October 17th, 1875.

"Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him."—ACTS xvii. 18.

I HAVE pointed out to you † that Christianity has the largest affinities, and may be found in the most widely differing conditions, circumstances, and characters of men, and that whensoever it is preached as though it had a special meaning, either to the poor or to the rich, to the learned or to the unlearned, to humble fishermen or to the courtly man of Arimathea, its chiefest glory is taken from it. If anybody supposes that it would be a fair picture of Christianity to draw none but beggars and fishermen, he commits about as vulgar an error as

* Zeno, the founder of the Stoic philosophy, appears to have flourished in the first half of the third century, B.C.

† "The Authentic Gospel," Sermon 7.

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those who draw around Christ only such men as Joseph of Arimathea.

Christianity is infinitely larger and wider than that. It belongs to all mankind. To the old it speaks of comfort; to the weary it speaks of a rest close by; to the troubled it tells of the eternal peace. To women it has a voice of relationship, because it speaks of self-sacrifice; for it is woman's necessity to be self-sacrificing, if it be not her glory. And it teaches that wealth is god-like, because of its power of giving. To the poor it teaches godly endurance. To the soldier it speaks of keeping ever before him the grand things of patriotism. To John Baptist it speaks of a way which he is to make clear for the coming higher law. To the artist it tells of a mission ever to make plain to men the value of their eyes, to make clear to them the beauty of the Lord, as seen in His works. To the physician it speaks of a mission to teach men the laws relating to health, that so, because never forsaking its conditions, they may learn to rejoice in existence. Wheresoever there is any lawful pursuit of man, Christianity comes with its gracious guidance and constant gift.

We have also considered what it is that constitutes goodness, the possession of which helps a

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man in the doing of any work which his hand findeth to do. Socrates was sneered at once for saying that men who did wise things should be wise, and they who did just things should be just. And though some of you may smile at this at first, yet it is nevertheless true. You may do a wise thing without knowing it to be wise, do it without intending it to be wise, and may never deviate into wisdom. Therefore, a man need not necessarily have wisdom in order to do a wise thing, nor love justice in order to do a just thing. It is the charitable spirit of a man, which, flowing into his work, constitutes it a work of piety and of love. Wheresoever large love is, all things are lawful, though all things may not be expedient.

And all vessels can hold charity, from the golden ones which stand nigh to the altar, to those that are used for its cleansing. All things can be done in charity. You may play with a little child, and your whole face may beam with charity; or you may govern a kingdom, and you may do it with love. All forms and creeds that are not the outcome of charity, have nothing to do with the religion of Jesus Christ. They are for the chapel, the vestry, for deacons, and small things of that kind, but the large religion of Jesus Christ receives

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all men, has its laws and obligations for all men, calls for all men. It has its "noble army of martyrs," and its true "saints." It includes the priest and the physician, the man of science, and also the hewer of wood and the drawer of water, he who built the house as well as he who lifted up the stones and he who prepared them for use. For it is by virtue of that which, flowing into our actions, makes them to be holy actions, that which is before all conditions, even charity, that we are Christians. There is no house so small that charity may not fill, no lot so mean that it cannot brighten, and no lot so splendid that it cannot make more lustrous.

Christianity is the spirit of liberty, because it is the spirit of charity. It resists the characterization that is marked arbitrarily upon things, and refuses to say that all men are made bad because of one man's fall. Love is that which, flowing into a man's action, constitutes that action to be pure, a holy service of God.

Now, contrasts and comparisons are often admirable methods of learning to understand things. For few men are so accurate as to see the whole beauty of a thing at once, and fair things are often made to look fairer by foul ones being placed near them. So some further peculiarities of this religion

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come out in contrast. And perhaps there is no man, standing by the ideal Christian, who can so well set this forth, by his likeness and by his unlikeness, as the Stoic.

With the history of the Stoics I will not trouble you, nor will I trouble you about dates. Dates are admirable things in their way, as nails for fastening pictures on; or when you tell a story, they serve as pegs to mark its place in history. Suffice it for you to remember that perhaps the noblest production of those early times was the Stoic. Strong, frigid, grand, the nearest approach to the Christian, perhaps, of any, and yet, because so near, so amazingly far. Though of course the early days of Stoicism were its palmy days, I will not trouble you with the names of its founders, or the history of their doings. Suffice it to know that the morality of the Stoic was based upon pride.

The attitude of the Stoic was that of a man who had disciplined himself, and made himself strong, who could look upon the passing crowd around him as a man looks upon the flies of autumn, admitting that they sting, but who would rather die than show that they have any power to disturb his soul. The Stoic's morality being based upon pride, he tramples upon pain, and though he feels it

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keenly, he will not show it. The outlying province called the body is as far distant from the Stoic's real soul as though soul and body lived in different hemispheres. Standing in the world, he defies it; its pleasures he does not care for, and as to its pains, he bears them with a fine scorn.

Most of us are rather fonder of carrying our heads up than down, and in uprightness of carriage most of us see much to admire. But if we turn to the Christian spirit, then the more shall we love righteousness as righteousness, and value conduct more than mere profession. The greatness of the Stoic consisted in the victory of pride over feeling, while the Christian man brings his feelings into harmony with his duty. The Stoic had faith in himself, while the Christian lives by faith in Another (I mean as it stands in the Scripture, and not as it is too frequently taught). The one man thinks himself independent, while the other man feels called upon to put faith absolute in Another, and is willing to be guided and governed by Him. The Stoic waits the issues of fate—and, short of a faith in the living God, that is one of the grandest things. For when a man is a fatalist, as a thinking man will be when he has not got this Christian faith, who wants prophecies? He sees consequences in

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their causes. He says, "If it is written that you are to die, die, and be quiet. What will be, will be." *He* run about fortune-telling and spirit-rapping, and peeping and prying into to-morrow? Not he. And though I admit that there is a touch of *being driven* about it, yet there is a fine carelessness and a grand fatalistic devotion about these Stoics that is sublime. But the Christian man knows this, that in his religion there is a region into which he invites not the company of the metaphysician. He asks for no proof. He has within him a world like a child's world, real and true to him, though men from without may smile and ask for "proof." The Christian man makes God his Father and Friend—makes Him a Person. The quiet Christian man, though he reads of those things about which the philosophers write, is not troubled by them. He goes into a fairy-land of his own, and passes out of the region of childhood into the deep experiences of the believer.

"But," you may say to him, "how can you prove God to be a Person?" He never wastes his time in attempting to prove it. But you say "That is anthropomorphic." Yes, I know it is, immensely so, constantly, gloriously, passionately so. If I believe in God as a Person, if I believe that He has

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form, and colour, and parts, and passions, what does it matter? Throw that out of doors, then; it will be something to keep the howling philosophers quiet. But I trouble myself nothing about Personalities, nor with any questions as to whether there are three Gods or one God, or three in one or one in three. If God be necessary to you as a man, then think of Him as the truest, tenderest, wisest man you ever knew, and you will not go far astray. Thus men learn the secrets of their own souls, and the providence and loving-kindness of God, though, no doubt, if the closed door were to be opened again, and they were asked to give a reason for the faith that is in them, they would make but a poor business of it. Shut the theologians out. Bid them adieu. Leave them, as the Lord did his disciples when he said to them "Sit ye here, whilst I go yonder."

So the Christian man walks in the confidence of love, instead of in the chill sublimities of fate. The Stoic's hopes and futures are bounded by the verges of ruin. He thinks that when he has had a roll round, he will come up again by-and-by, perhaps. But you might as well attach yourself to one of the comets as that. The Christian man believes in an *individual* life; he believes that *he*, Peter, John,

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or James shall see life again one day under more noble conditions.

There are obvious differences between Stoics and Christians, but they are so obvious that I will only just mention them. Grant that the noblest, holiest-looking man of old times was Marcus Aurelius. That man perhaps comes the nearest of any to the ideal Christian. Now let me point out the difference. The Stoic attaches honour to that person who does what is right in spite of his feelings. He did what was honourable, but he did not like it. It was honourable for a man to carry a burden when he would rather be at his ease, and they would not give honour to any one who had not had trials. They looked upon them as little people who were all very well in their way, but they said, "Those of you who have had great struggles, *you* are the ones to be honoured. The more your feelings are against your duty, the more we will honour you for the doing of it. He who raises himself most above his feelings shall be the highest and noblest." And so strongly did they feel this, that they spoke as though pain were a pleasure, and heat and cold were one as good as the other. To hear the Stoic talk, you would think it was quite a pleasure to be pinched, and quite a

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joy to be nipped. They believed that honour belonged chiefly, almost entirely, to that person who acted virtuously in spite of his feelings, who raised himself above his feelings, or succeeded in extinguishing them, to those who had their feelings under their feet, let them be what they would, and held on the even path of justice.

Now there is an infinite contrast between this grand, proud heart, this cold man with his feelings trampled under foot, and the ideal Christian man, with feelings sensitive, large, full, and passionate, yet constantly endeavouring to bring those feelings to his duty, in the hope that what is done now from a sense of duty, may one day be done as the result of right feeling, and the outflowing of a true desire, when righteousness shall throb in the pulse, and beam in the eye, and rule the whole man.

Between the Stoic and Christ we have had likenesses pointed out *ad nauseam*, but we seldom hear anything about their unlikeness. One of the fundamental doctrines of the religion of Christ is that there is no real virtue without feeling; but here is the Stoic, and he says, "In what I have done there is no real virtue except to the degree that I trample on my feelings." What care I for a whited

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sepulchre? What do I care for expressions of friendship, except there be the divine love in the heart? So you will see the prodigious difference there is between the two things—the one making a thing to be virtuous only to the degree in which the feelings are crushed, and the other proclaiming that no action can be virtuous except to the degree in which the feelings are brought into conformity with the law and will of God.

Hence, the great aim of the Christian man is to immortalise the affections, and bring them into harmony with the law of true morality. But most of us behold it from afar. When Christ came it was his *constant* cry. We find him holding up all actions in the light of the feeling out of which they come, weighing that paltry coin in the scale of feeling, and counting it of greater value than the gold of the Pharisees, because with it that poor woman poured out all her love. So the one man seeks to kill his feelings, and the other man seeks to get to that pass when he can say with David, "O Lord, how *love* I Thy law, it is my meditation all the day long. Thy laws, Thy statutes, have become my *songs* in the house of my pilgrimage." So loved he them, that he sang them; so sweet at last he found them, that he set them to music, and

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heart and hand went sweetly through them together —heart and hand and soul and love.

Now, I say that this is a fundamental and utter difference, as reverse as two things can be. You cannot do a good thing in a Christian sense without right feeling. A thing may be right socially, but it is not so to God except the feelings of the heart are brought into harmony with the dictates of the conscience. Until the heart reaches this supreme grace, your action may be one of utility, but it is not one of righteousness; your deed may be excellent in itself, but it is not beautiful in the eyes of God. Between these two things there is a contrariety most marked. If the Stoics had feelings, and those feelings were against their duty, they would hold up their writhing feelings to show you their victory over them. Any feeling you have that is opposed to right is a wrong feeling. If the Stoic had feelings that were vipers, then he would out with the vipers and fling them into the fire; but the Christian, instead of throwing them into the fire, must have their fangs taken out, that his feelings may be brought into sweet harmony with reason and conscience. This is what ought to be done. Instead of pulling up his feelings, and casting them into the fire, the hope of the Christian is

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to bring the thoughts and feelings of his heart into accord with what he believes to be the will, and word, and command of the Lord.

The Stoics preached only to the few, for such heroic endurance as they required was only given to the few; but when the religion of Jesus Christ was preached, it was preached to the many. It had a word for little Zaccheus, who was so small in stature; for the bruised reeds, already nearly broken by the troubles of this world; for the smoking flax, so near expiring that only a gentle curling smoke showed the divine fire still lived. And what did it appeal to but to the feelings, to the heart? Whosoever *loveth* liveth.

But now, mindful that some of you may see in this a difference of teaching—(*I* don't see any impropriety in appealing to feeling with regard to religion, in the sense in which I have spoken of it, but I think it is very likely that some of you do)* —I repeat that it was only whensoever any one went in haste to Christ and poured out their feelings that he seemed to put them back with a cold hand—as when that woman cried out to him in her enthusiasm, "Blessed be the womb that bare thee,

* See the Sermon on "Unreasoning Feeling," in "The Authentic Gospel."

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and the paps that thou hast sucked!" he said unto her, "Nay, rather, blessed be they that hear the word of God, and do it." Not that the woman was wrong, but it was this bubble-blowing, this pouring out into the air of a little quantity of sentiment: all *that* must go where it came from—the land of invisibility. No religion can ever stand the wear and tear of this world in that fashion. The question is *how* to stir the feelings, how to bring the feelings into accord with the conscience, so that feeling and conscience may go together. But he who *begins* with feeling has taken the wrong method. The mind must be informed, the conscience stirred, and, after that is brought about, then what the mind wills shall be the true desire of the heart. Therefore, I see no inconsistency in the two things. The one is a question of bringing the feelings into harmony with the principles of morality, and the other is a question of the *dominancy* of feeling over the judgment. Christ never discouraged feeling or passion; he only tried to guide them rightly. As the leaping foot of youth is best guided by one who has lost the power in the *foot* of leaping, though he has *not* lost the joy of the *heart*, so the feelings of the soul require to be guided by the steadfast, strong, calm, almost

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cold voice of reason, and the loving of the heart needs to be regulated by conscience, conviction of duty, and a sublime desire that others may be saved.

Ponder, then, upon the difference between the Stoic and the Christian, and you will understand how near the Stoic came to the Christian, and yet what a great gulf there was between the two, and how to most of us Christianity is the better faith and the sweeter creed. And when the great days come, when with feelings stronger than ever, man shall yet be perfect and sinless; when passion shall be asleep, and desire shall have had its way; the days when the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall creep over the troubled waters of our spirits; there shall be a great calm. This is the calm for which we long, this is the peace for which we sigh, when, purged from all impurity, all the old storm between the feelings and the conscience will be at an end, and *both* be perfectly united in the sweet service of God.

And *that* man shall know hereafter that perfect peace who can say, "Thy statutes—those old restraints, those locks and bolts and keys, Thy 'Thou shalt nots"—these things are now my *songs*, the music of my heart, the music of my desires; the whole orchestra plays them; everything in me

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plays them ; passion, pathos, all things are Thine, O God ; Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." That comes to him who shall have his feelings accordant with conscience. Then, if he go to conscience for the score, he can let his feelings play their sweet music, until at last he can bear and delight to take to pieces the complexity of the music, and know whence came all its variety of pain and sweetness, and see the infiniteness of the parts that went to make up the one grand whole. Then, while he rejoices in the infiniteness of the parts, yet, when he listens to them, they shall rise, not as many, but as one, one only, first begotten, never repeated, knowing no posterity, because combining within itself all things.

Thus, then, all these things figure forth dimly—or, rather, the dimness of our eyes makes dull the vision—of a time when perfect man shall dwell in the perfect heavens, the New Jerusalem, the City that hath for its Maker and Builder the Everlasting God.

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CHRIST AND EPICURUS.

Morning, October 24th, 1875.

"Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him."—ACTS xvii. 18.

CALL to mind for a moment how Socrates was smiled at once for saying that a man who did just things ought to be just; and it was found, as usual, that the wise man was right, and the rude smiler a fool; for that a man might do a right thing without thinking of it, but, in order to constitute it a just action, he should have meant it, known it, and persevered in the doing of it. We went on from there to examine what is that in a man's actions which constitutes them righteous or just. You and I have nothing to do with the decisions of a magistracy, or of Scriptures, or what not, as to what is right and wrong. The things that are right show their righteousness, and the things that

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are sweet show their sweetness in our inner consciousness. You may shout out that a thing is right; but if my soul says it is not right, it cannot be right to me, whosoever may declare it to be so. And when sourness is in my mouth, I can taste no sweetness. Then we saw how Christianity has a fine affinity for men in all sorts and conditions of life; that it has no special gospel to meet the working-man, and is no monopoly of theirs.

We were also reminding you of some of those Stoics that met Paul at Athens; and upon the whole, we found that the Stoic was about the noblest-looking creature of old times, yet essentially different from the Christian man. For the Stoic set store upon an action in proportion as the feelings were crushed thereby. He, who, quivering with pain, should act as though he felt no pain; he who, when his heart-strings were all torn and bleeding, should act with a cool, calm courage, was the grand man of the Stoics. On the other hand, he only is beautiful, in the Christian philosophy, whose actions spring out of his feelings. Christianity asks no man to mortify his feelings, but to bring them home to charity; then, out of the heart shall spring his actions. The Christian man has nothing to do with the affectations of Stoicism. I

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am not here to crush my feelings, but to be gratified by them; only they must be filled full of charity. Then, the Stoic is an unloveable man. Oh! you may admire him; you may even build him a statue, and talk cant about him; but *love* him? *Impossible!* Had Christ been a Stoic, he would have been adorable; but as a man of feeling, he was loveable. But, though the Stoic taught many things in accordance with Christianity, he was not loveable.

Now, turn, and look at that great man, Epicurus.* His very name has come down in the world. From having been a most admirable developer of the Cyrenaic philosophy, ignorant people (who pick up fine words first, and, if they have leisure, understand them afterwards) look upon him as a mere lover of good living; and so, a man who is nice in his eating is called an "epicure." And though our text seems to speak rather lightly

* Epicurus was born 342 B.C. His ethical theory was based upon the dogma of the Cyrenaics, that pleasure constitutes the highest happiness, and must consequently be the end of all human exertions. Epicurus, however, developed and ennobled this theory, in a manner which constitutes the real merit of his philosophy, and which gained for him so many friends and admirers both in antiquity and in modern times.—Dr. Smith's "Classical Dictionary."

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of those men who went about to seek for something new, their way of idling was as good, and probably as useful, as some of our modern methods. I have often admired the way in which this passage of the Acts sets forth the character of those people. It says they did *nothing else* but seek after something new either to hear or to talk about. But how much of the conversation of the present day consists in continually going over and over again the dreary enumeration of things you are tired of! These Athenians, having nothing to do, chose one of the most interesting ways of doing nothing.

With the history of the Epicureans I shall not trouble you, except to say that their chief flourished two or three hundred years before Christ. The poem of Lucretius, a Roman philosopher who flourished some sixty years before Christ, may be looked upon as the finest production of the Epicurean school. But care must be taken in handling that poem. It is not to be understood by small people or dull people; but, for those who can understand it, there is not much harm.

The doctrine, as far as we are concerned, is that true pleasure, and not absolute truth, is the aim of

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the philosopher. But pleasure nowadays has sunk down into meanness. Ask the majority of people what they mean by a day's pleasure, and they will say, "Oh, having a 'little picnic.'" But we are talking now of pleasure in the old sense, in the sense in which we say that *God* "takes pleasure," in such and such things; and this sort of pleasure is not something for which you can take a ticket at sixpence or a shilling. All things are attendants and guards to the queen spirit within, and its maids of honour are our glorious senses and passions. Thus, listening and being glad, touching and being charmed, tasting and being delighted; at last all sense of weariness in our work, all groaning because of this prison-house of the body, all feeling of exile —all this shall pass away, and soul and body, life and passion and sense, shall mingle together, to teach us that we are in our own house, and it is well furnished; that we are its lords, and may know how to extract from it glory. Therefore, true pleasure is that frame of man's spirit in which he feels satisfied, gratified, justified, glorified. It is because so few people understand these things that they have come to think that a "little picnic," and plenty of "fuddling," constitute pleasure, and that what Lucretius came to teach was that men should

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get as much pleasure of the sixpenny sort out of life as they can. But we know that that was not his meaning.

In one way it is dangerous to teach any true philosophy. Epicurus said that the chief aim of man is pleasure. He lifted up the body; he poured out the wine of life, and looked at fulness of pleasure as the aim of man. So poor Epicurus has been set upon, until at last he has come to lend his name to the meanest and miserablest of creatures —the epicure; and carefulness in the matter of eating has come to be considered as the sign of a good organization subordinated to low things, as with poor Dr. Johnson, who gave too evident signs of enjoyment of his dinner. Epicurus taught that true pleasure, and not absolute truth, was the aim of man. The Stoics, on the other hand, wanted absolute truth, which they could not have. Like some theologians of to-day, they had a wonderful creed; but they wanted to know the date of creation, the mysteries of the Trinity, and a few other matters beyond their reach, and they considered the discussion of these subjects, and *keeping at it*, to be one of the most desirable pursuits of man. They were everlastingly discussing the nature of being, and trying to get at the absolute

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truth about these things. So these Epicureans—who were opposed to thought, and considered abstract truth to be abstract fiddlesticks—said that experience, and not abstract reasoning, was the test upon which to rely. They considered that all questions were to be settled, not upon abstract grounds, but upon experimental experience.

Now, you will see, we come to the right of the Senses to be the criterion of truth, and not Reason. How easily all this may be abused may readily be seen. But what that great man taught was that the study of physics should be made subservient to the goods of life; he sought to clear this world of the moonshine and cobwebs and superstition which priestcraft had brought it to. So this man, too, was the herald of a better day; this man too, was taught of God; and he, though he may not be of the kingdom of heaven, shall not lack some of the praises which Christ gave to John Baptist.

Revelation cannot reveal anything to a man on a subject of which he knows nothing. Carry the revelation of a steam engine to the centre of Africa and it would be of no use; but to him who knows something of the power of steam, to him it would be possible. Watt's childish experiment with the

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quivering kettle lid led him to many important discoveries. Christianity was the product of all that went before it, and chiefly of the religion of Moses. This Epicurus was a useful man in teaching that supreme pleasure was of use; though we can understand how this may sink down to what is called materialism. What was the use of that Stoic standing there and sublimely crying out that the body had no business in the world, except to be kicked and blinded and buffeted? The stern justice of the Stoic and the doctrine of Epicureanism were two distinct elements which had to be reconciled. But Epicureanism never was in opposition to Christianity. The roots of morality are in the nature of each man, and can be developed out of the spirit of man. Thus, all these doctrines were necessary steps in preparing the way for Christ.

There is a charming story in the Apocrypha where the gods were brought into disgrace. A sacrifice was prepared for them, and the priests came in the night, and took it, and then declared that the gods had eaten it all.* But the bold criticism of the sceptic detected the fraud. It is

* Bel and the Dragon.

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the man who won't preach smooth things who does good. And sceptics are useful people; for they find out that the credulity of others has been too large. They screw up their scant throats so as to make the gulping down of a camel impossible, and advise other folks to do the same. He who diminishes the power of easy belief does good. So these sceptics, not believing the stories of the priests, scattered sand upon the floor of the Temple. And, in the morning, the footprints of men and women and children were found upon the sand. The priests and their families had been there, and *they* had eaten the banquet. When men offered their sacrifices to the gods, the priests always divided the fat from the lean; and they burned the fat with the incense (God may have that!), but the lean they kept for themselves. So that man did good who satirized them, and I put him down with John Baptist and all other men who make plain the truth of God by jeering at the gods of the heathen. As Elijah said to the priests of Baal, Perhaps your god is on a journey! perhaps he is asleep! cry aloud! The dreadful scorn of the prophet is needed in all ages in order that men may learn, if they can learn it, that "God is a Spirit, and they that

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worship Him must worship him in Spirit and in truth."

So one welcomes Epicurus and Lucretius as men who protested on behalf of true pleasure; for only as that is duly acknowledged and allowed for, can we have that justifiable morality which we seek to enforce. What we want is the co-ordination of the body and the soul. He teaches not Christianity who degrades the body. When Christianity came, it was so determined to take part with Epicurus that it actually proclaimed the resurrection of the body, and declared that this very body should come again after death. It taught that the body is the temple of the spirit, and proclaimed the incarnation of God. So thoroughly did Christianity go with certain parts of Epicureanism that, instead of putting down the body, it said, "Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." "Very God of very God, who came down from heaven, and was *incarnate* by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary;* who was made man, who suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, and the third day *rose again* from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father

* See the Nicene Creed, in the Book of Common Prayer.

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Almighty; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." And this man Epicurus, he too protested for the co-ordination of the body and the soul, the divine origin of each, for the part they have to play in bringing a man to understand the practical rules of life; which are the true end of the philosopher, not extracts from a book which nobody ever saw any verifications of, or from charters which nobody ever granted.

Then again, this man Paul—and one loves him—the larger part of his discourse was not addressed to the Stoics, but to the Epicureans; because Paul saw that it was impossible for the Epicurean doctrine to stand as it was; and he also saw how dangerous it might become unless a check could be put upon it in the right place.

The Epicureans taught individual freedom in all things; but the Stoics had a code of rules, or, as you have, a whole collection of etiquettes—a book to which you can refer, to see what your duty is. You are in a difficulty, perhaps, as regards your duty in a certain matter. You refer to your book, and on page 7, clause 50, you find a rule which tells you what to do. Very convenient! But who wrote that book? Why should you follow those rules of Lord Chesterfield's? "Oh! he was an

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authority." Whence came his authority? "He gained it by experience." Well, then, I say, my experience is different from his. "But you ought to subordinate your experience to his." I will, in as far as his experience is bigger and better than mine. But, as far as my own experience goes, at least, I must be allowed to walk by it. If we in this place were not what we are, we should be members of an infallible church. If I did not hold what I find shocks some of you—the freedom of each man to judge, weigh, doubt, before choosing, and to reject and overthrow if his reason approves not—I must go over to the camp of authority, I must have my affairs managed for me by a broker, and ask him to guide me through this world to the next. I must say to him, "Broke for me; do for me; save me!" I must give him the keys. But not being able to do that, I go to the other extreme —of individual freedom, coerced by nothing, ruled only by conscience, willing obedience, conscious conviction.

If, therefore, in taking my walks abroad, I meet with Moses; if, in some spirit-circle, Moses should come to me; Moses would of course discourse to me; but I should say, "There is a point, Moses, on which I don't agree with you." Moses would

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argue with me, and who knows but that I should be able to show Moses that, if he had lived longer, he would have agreed with me?

As long as I am an Epicurean, or, rather, a follower of Epicurus in some directions—for only in some points do I agree with him—so must I have my experience, judgment, and conscience, and, therefore, my own responsibility. I take it upon me deliberately. It was because that grand old pagan was dead against any doctrine of tyranny, of pure spiritualism, or of fate, that he proclaimed the individual freedom of each man. He, too, was one of those who prepared human thought for a religion which, leaving each man free, yet retains him by charity, by faith, by the love of the lovely, and the faithful following of the chief of all graces; retains him, if he so wishes it, by the name of "Christian," and makes him a believer in Jesus Christ.

If this be so, you will see that the Christian man is not determined by the accident of belief, but by an agreement of spirit. He, therefore, who has charity, has the spirit of Christ, though that man may be so intellectual as to be obliged to reject the miracles recorded in the Gospels, or regard them as a mere after-glow, coming across from sinking suns

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whose light is thrown for a time upon the mountain tops. That man is still related to God by charity; and whether you call him "Christian" or not, is no matter—certainly not to him, for the nomenclature of the churches will not be found in heaven. I should as soon expect to meet with the large religion of Jesus Christ in the childhood of the world and the babyhood of humanity! To me, whether man call me "Christian" or not, whether I am in a church which bids me kneel, or one which bids me rise, what matter? To me it is of no consequence. These are things which must stop on this side the narrow river; we cannot carry such trash across. To him who lives the life of charity and just judgment, who exhibits a blameless character before the world, what matter whether he be Greek or Jew? Not those who are of the earth earthy, can shine in God's kingdom; but those who are most loving, most lowly, tender, gentle and merciful. The least in the kingdom of Christ outshines him who has nothing to talk of but doom and hell; for that sweet King has nothing to preach of but love and mercy and pity and peace.

Learn, then, that by the course of human thought has been won that grand religion which we call "Christianity." It is the grand development of

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the solemn life of man, and is subject to the same great laws. It is a development of the world of human thought, under the guidance of the Spirit of God. It has things about it which must pass away, but it has its essence which can *never* pass away. In as far as it is of God, it lives; but in as far as it is not thus fitted to be permanent, it must die. So, with unterrified souls, we may watch it drop off its old worn-out mediæval rags; and behold, without fear, the doings of Science; and listen to the sceptic's denials, knowing that all these things are but as the flail—they do but separate the husks from the wheat. The man who understands these things is ne'er disturbed; he knows that God sends the stormy wind, fulfilling His word, and that it is as much wanted in human thought as it is wanted at sea, where, as each wave goes up to baptize and purify the air, every briny part of it is kissed and made holy.

Thus, then, as the Psalmist sings with rapture of the "Stormy winds, fulfilling Thy word," so the Christian man looks at every storming, babbling Voltaire, and listens to Epicurus and to the Stoic, undisturbed. These may have been stormy winds, but they are fulfilling His word, they are delivering it from polytheism, they are putting in a plea for

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the body, and they are triumphing *over* the body with a grand scorn. Thus, the martyr and the saint, the unbeliever and the believer, the professor of creeds and the man creedless and sceptical—they all be God's ; all are helping the world on to the purer and more perfect light that is yet to come.

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CHRIST AND MOHAMMED.

Morning, September 17th, 1876.

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."—JOHN xviii. 36.

TO-DAY I point to a matter of great interest, and one which ought to be attended to. For just now there seems to be some danger lest the religion of Mohammed should be both misunderstood and misrepresented, as compared to the other religions of the world, and therefore to the religion of Christ. No antagonism against the Turks should for a moment bias our understanding as to the peculiar influences for good or evil, the probabilities of a long or short life, the amount of blessing or the amount of cursing bestowed upon the world by the great religion of Mohammed. So, for a little while,

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let us separate these two things. For remember, the Turks were not the people to whom the great prophet first preached, he preached to a nobler race by far. It has become the fashion to call Mohammed a "false prophet;" and when you have done that, some of you think you have said all that can be said of this great man. Mohammed was the law-giver of the Arabs, a proclaimer of the Unity of God, a destroyer of idols, the creator of a people who should afterwards become famous in science and art. The Turks were a race of idolators, inferior to the Arabs, and, even to this day, are not to be compared to the race amongst whom Mohammed was born. Who knows what a wonderful religion that must have been which could preach the Unity of God, and do it so well that the false gods fell before it! They fell, from respect to the prophet, and because of that truth, which all men acknowledge—that all religions have lived by virtue of the truth that was in them, and not by virtue of the falsity with which they were mixed.

Therefore, dismissing the Turks, as a set of people whose religion it is only possible to describe in a dead language, for very shame, we will endeavour to show what there is in the religion of Mohammed which marks it as doomed to pass

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away, or to be taken up into something larger, deeper, more divine and eternal. It is just possible that you have heard of Mohammed only as a false prophet, a religious quack, who made his Bible as he went on; and that when he wanted something, he got a revelation first, in order to justify what he was determined to have, with or without it. I would ask you to remember that such legends always grow round great men, as parasitic weeds grow round nobler plants.

For the benefit of those of you who are interested, I would remind you that this man rose about 600 years after Christ. He was a strong, passionate, hot-blooded, deep-thinking, honest, sensual, religious man. He looked round this world and beheld it till it became a riddle. To the half-taught, the world is simple enough; they can explain it as they do everything else: but to the deep-thinking man it is ever a mystery; out of darkness into darkness it seems ever to roll. This deep-thinking man arose in the midst of idolatrous, stupid religions. A wonderful stone, fallen down from heaven, was certainly more respectable on that account than as though dug out of the earth.* Out of the earth

* The Black Stone, in the wall of the Kaaba at Mecca, is a fragment of volcanic basalt, sprinkled with coloured

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came Rationalism; out of heaven came Revelation, Infallibility, and so forth. This wretched stone, cast out by some planet which found the burden too heavy perhaps, became a badge of worship. Ritualism set itself up to bow before the stone. And when this man saw the people duck and dive and sneak and crawl before the stone, it became very clear to him that there could not be any religion for them without mysteries. As far as his own people were concerned, then, what a reformer he was! For all religions should be weighed by what went before them, as well as by what came after them; and, compared to the idolatry of his day, the religion of Mohammed was light and life.

He was taken into Syria, and what sort of Christians did he find there? People with their minds taken up with the most dreary discussions on the most senseless sectarianism. You have only to hear the Athanasian Creed to have some notion of what these Christians were about there in Syria, hating one another with a fine fervour, and over questions which they could not in the least understand. They damned one another with modern

crystals. Its form is semicircular, and it measures about six inches in height and eight in breadth. See Muir, ii. 35, and Burckhardt, p. 137.

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vigour and with ancient zeal, and made the world-to-come a terror. There was little to be gotten there, for the guidance of the soul—about as much guidance as can be got from the religion of this country now, with its affectations of the unintelligible, the unknowable, and the unknown. Compared with a large part of what was called Christianity, Mohammedanism was an improvement, as it would be now, in some respects.

This great prophet had heard by the hearing of the ear, in a confused way, the words of the Old Testament and of the New. He acknowledged the greatness of Moses, and the fatherhood of Abraham; he knew Christ and acknowledged him to be one of the great prophets. But when they talked to him about the Virgin being divine; and when he heard that strange doctrine maintained by one sect —that she was one member of the Trinity; when he saw the Patriarchs of the Greek Church trying to sift the wheat from the chaff,—he turned to the prophets of the Old Testament, and pronounced them to be great; he turned to Christ, and pronounced him to be a great prophet too; but he said there was one other to come, and that *he himself was the man.* So, late in life (that is, for such a purpose), at forty years of age, this man

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began to teach religion. Up to forty, he was a quiet man, and showed no very convincing signs of power. They who take him for a quack, must wonder why he waited so long before he opened his shop. But it was with regard to him, as with Cromwell—both men had to wait till their shadows were short, before they set out on their marvellous journey of imposture.

Now this man, looking at the Jewish history, hating idolatry as the greatest hindrance to the human soul, enraged with idolators, disgusted with graven images—this man beheld with clearest vision that God was One only, One His name, Allah the Great. To you and me it is difficult to understand the repulsion which the pure proclamation of the unity of God has met with in the world. To us it is the beginning of all theology; and the end of all. But in those days, to preach the unity of God was to sow seeds of discord among all forms of religion. This man clearly saw that there was but one God; and feeling, as all men did, the fallibility of his own reason, and trembling beneath powers too great, and mysteries too mighty for his understanding, this deep-hearted man found that one great thing required in man was submission to God. God was great; One only. Man was weak; let

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man bow, bend, yield, submit. Mohammed was an Eastern Calvin in the greatness of his submission; and no Jew could be more clear about the unity of God. And to convert, as this man has done, all those whom he taught (180,000,000 of human beings) to his way of thinking and believing, is that the task a "false prophet"? For twelve hundred years 180,000,000 people have taken him to be a prophet, and they have done well. This prophet, then, holding opinions which were fatal to polytheism or a belief in a multitude of gods, taught the sublime truth that there was but one God, and but one prophet (by which he meant there was no other to come, and that therefore no other would be supplied). Now, compared to anything which had gone before him, except potentially, how could they think of this man but as Heaven-sent?

Breaking away, then, from all the follies which surrounded him, for awhile he was content to pursue his teaching quietly. But at length this fiery-headed man—who had heard no "Sermon on the Mount," who had heard nothing of Christianity but the wrangling of sectarianism and the "glories of the fight"—found his blood rising hot because the people sneered at him and insulted him. So, by degrees, out came the sword. But if it did, it was

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but "a blow for a blow." So this religion became a sword religion. When people insulted him, he used the sword, and gloried in it. Oh, strange difference between this religion, and the religion of him who cried, "Put up thy sword: they who use the sword shall perish by the sword!" And between Mohammed's first fight, and Christ's sheathed sword, there lies much of the difference between these two great faiths.

By-and-by the Koran came, little by little; here a scrap of old inspiration, and there something new. Some of you have tried to read it. Dreary work! Here and there are pearls of pure thought, jewels of price; but the amount of wool-work there is to get through, in order to reach them, the vain repetitions, the idle jingling of foolish sentences, is wonderful. Yet there are lovely sentences here and there, things worthy of Moses, and which reach almost unto Christ. So this book came by degrees to be accepted, till at last it became Law book, spiritual guide, book of books. To the scholarly Arab, it was not the only book. It is the fashion now to cry up those sacred books of the old religion of the Arabs; and it is possible to find in *them* also lovely passages, and beautiful ideas; but only far apart, occasional islands, with dreary seas between.

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Now, the Arab, lifted up by this great prophet, storms across the world, makes his way into Spain, storms the gates of Vienna, and then comes back. And we do honour this great prophet. Of course his faults were great. He was a strong, big, sensual man. "Yes, and a polygamist." Yes, but so were the patriarchs. It was a custom which was generally agreed with in those days. Unless a man goes beneath institutions, sees to the very centre, and puts his finger upon the pivot on which a thing turns, he is apt to be misled.

Remember, all religions have exceedingly clear visions upon what they like, and not upon what they despise. "Moses," it says, "allowed you this, because of the hardness of your hearts." Moses did what he could to regulate and restrain what he could not prevent. Moses found the gospel of revenge in vogue, and he restrained that. The natural man said, "You have given me one blow, and I should like to give you two for it; nay, I will keep on till you are down in the dirt." "No," said Moses, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; no more. Balance the one against the other; you are quits." That was all Moses could do. He was not there to teach the deep-down truths of Jesus Christ; therefore he was under restraint. Moses

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found polygamy, and he let it alone for the most part; nevertheless, what little he did do in that direction, was in the way of discouraging it. Moses, you know, was a divinely inspired prophet, receiving revelations from God concerning curtains and badgers' skins, and how to dye them. He received all his laws, you know, in a whisper from God, in human language—in Hebrew probably, but that is not quite known! Now, then, if Moses was divinely inspired, a man into whose ears God whispered concerning the customs of the country, and if Moses said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and if that was fair, in comparison with what went before, why proclaim against Moses? Oh, great soul! he did what he could. He endeavoured to put wrath and revenge within due boundaries. And, if it was not given him to say that polygamy was unwholesome, and must ultimately perish; why, all he did say was in that direction.

So with regard to polygamy among the Mohammedans. The thing dies out in time. Mohammed gave no new command about it; it was a convenient practice, and was recognized as an improvement on what had gone before. For even the recognized position of four wives, was better

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than a whole host of concubines. And you remember that wife who loved him so well. Until she died, he had no other wife, though he had a mistress for a servant. And when, afterwards, *she* said to him, "Am I not better than this first wife?" "No," he said, "she believed in me first: she was my first convert." Then, subsequently, finding he was getting old, he married other wives, so that a child might be born to him. It was simply a desire that there should be one to bear his name and carry on his work; and the customs of the country allowed him to do it. I neither defend nor blame him. The sanctities of the Christian religion, the pureness which by-and-by bloomed into the monk or nun, this man knew not. His religion, like all other religions, except one, has its feet upon the common steps, and is soiled and fouled by the streets through which it walks.

And then, remember, this sensuousness has crept even into his heaven and hell. Well, if every one of you were to write your own description and likings as Swedenborg did, write it honestly, what would it be? Of course, if you were examined by a minister as to your idea of heaven, you would say it was "an assembly of psalm singers that ne'er breaks up, a Sabbath that ne'er ends." But, on the

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morning after you have been to a dance, who knows what heavenly figures might be described? And even Christ himself; he drew pictures of the heaven for which he longed. For the Lord Jesus knew how to preach of heavens of pureness, and sweetness, and knowledge. But it was of little use to speak in a language not one word of which they could understand; it was like giving the music of the spheres to those whose ears were dulled, or, to use the homely phrase of that Jew of old, like putting "a jewel of gold in a swine's snout." For, as most men's gods are like themselves, so their heavens are like earthly tea-gardens, or what not, every man after his order. Now Mohammed was a prodigious lover of women. This hearty man was too fond of them, in fact, and so the desires of his heart and the passions of his life were set forth in his descriptions of heaven—though it is possible to read the Mohammedan heaven between the lines, and to see that it did but set forth the earthly figure of things heavenly and spiritual. That is possible. For there *are* men thus deep-hearted, who behold in the figure of a woman the highest incarnation, the divinest rendering of all the mysteries of manhood and life. It is just possible that that may have been Mohammed's meaning. Now, then,

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we can see why, with all our hearts, we can respect this man. We behold in him the law-giver of his country, the creator of a nation who should clear away much of the superstition of older times; who should acknowledge the oneness of God, and live in absolute submission to the will of God. It is a great religion.

But, will it last? Bringing it side by side with the Christian religion, we must remember that when we speak of the Christian religion, we speak of what it is in itself, and separate it from the mass of wood, hay and stubble, which has gathered round it for centuries. For, in passing down the centuries, the Christian religion has received into itself things that have no heart or soul. On to religion all things will fasten; on religion, if possible, all things will feed. You may plant the very cedar of God in religion, and some parasite will come along, and get to the heart of it. He who longs for fresh delight under the branches of religion, longs for pelf, and will make merchandise of the same. The Temple was not too sacred to be made a money-exchange. So creeping things entered the ark, and out of the ark creeping things came.

The Christian religion, as I read it, aims at a pure democracy in the world. None of you are so

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foolish as to think that the Christian religion lies with kings, or priests, or crowns. Whensoever an Englishman passes out of his own land, he leaves behind him kings and their laws, their coronations, their anointings, their bishops, their beadles, their ermine and various other things. He leaves them all behind him, because, separated from their origins, and cut away from the traditions of English life they would not, could not flourish. So, wheresoever this sublime nation goes (and she is the mother of most, and lord of many), wheresoever this nation goes, these things fall away as things of the past, shadows of yesterday, because the evolution of the Christian religion is fatal to all such things. Therefore, the salvation of the world lies in pure democracy.

The Mohammedan religion is *doomed*, to death, unless it alter one fault,—it puts a moral disqualification upon women, and separates them from the privileges enjoyed by men. And, though Paul discoursed touching the behaviour of women in the Church, and though they are dumb in the Church, that was borrowed from Jewry, which taught that women had better be silent, or go home to bed, like good children. The spirit of Christianity in regard to these questions goes deeper down than covered

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heads or uncovered, and deeper than discussions about polygamy. Paul himself touched the goal when he said, "In Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one; all are the dear children of God." Whoso goes down to the depths of Christ's religion, goes under sects, pedigree, and all that business, and touches the one root from which all things come—that pure democracy in which there is no disqualification; in which, as heaven is open to all, so all things are open to all. When these days shall be fully come, knowledge shall be open to all, and there shall be no more need to say, "Know the Lord," for all shall know him. Now, it is impossible that the Mohammedan faith shall survive; for that one thing is fatal to it. As I read things, there is no institution, or custom, or way, that can have a long, or, at any rate, an eternal life, if it put any moral disqualification upon any creature whatsoever.

Mohammed had nought to say against slavery, though he sought to regulate it. Did Christ trouble himself about slavery? Not he. He goes deeper than constitutions, institutions, and laws; and proclaims all men to be the dear children of the loving Father, and that a time shall come when all shall

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look up to God as their Father and their Lover, willing the death of no man. He knew full well that—like all foul things, when the life within them is decayed—slavery would fall away and drop. And though it dies hard, it dies. Wheresoever the word of Jesus Christ comes, the slavery of the negro, the subjugation of women, all these things know their day is coming, though their final dying may be distant.

In this great religion that I profess, I read that the rights of all men are to be respected. It proclaims the solemn relation of each man to God, teaches man his duty, and proclaims that a day may and will come in this world when the sword shall be sheathed, the sceptre broken, the lion tamed, and the cockatrice's den become the playground for little children. But in this the Mohammedan religion has failed. Its women are miserable; it is violent to them, and allows no fresh air of freedom to blow upon them. Therefore, it is doomed to die, bound to perish. It may last long, for there is great good in it yet; but the realms of the future are not for it. In these matters whatsoever increaseth not, decreases. The tide begins to roll. A short moment, and there is no movement; then back it goes; for forward it cannot come.

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Speaking of these things, politically, one sees the inability of the Mohammedan religion, burdened by the Koran, which is seldom interpreted by rationalists, to make any permanent headway. Its inability to give the same rights to all; its terrible hatred of infidels; its drawn sword (though baptized and sanctified);—are fatal to it; for that nation which uses the sword, shall perish by the sword. "I shall see it, but not now." That religion which enjoins the killing of infidels as winning the favour of Heaven, and doing service for God, shall pass away. And how the wise soul sees the future of that faith that looks upon the brain and tongue (the sword of the mouth) as the prevailing weapon of the time to come! For the sword which you so unduly honour, the sword, of which we hear too much, it must go. It is the armour of ancient times, and belongs to the fighting ages of the world; and, though it is not sheathed yet, it must be, for the sheathed sword of the garden of Gethsemane was a prophecy of the fate of the sword of the world. And these strange precepts shall be followed instead: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

These things lie in the future: they come slowly.

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But we are marching toward them; for we have given up all private punishments into the hands of the State, and the State has become more tender-hearted; and war is found to be as inexpedient as it is debasing. Gentle love increases in the world. There are more lovers of peace than ever there were; and the nations are more slow to harm each other. And so we come to understand the meaning of these words, "A child shall lay his hand upon the cockatrice' den." Little by little, that day will come.

One need not enlarge upon the purer morals and sweeter air there will then be in the world; for that is the very breath of the Christian faith. Where Christ comes, the drinker's cup shall by-and-by cease, and songs of revelry shall die down; love, made sacred, deeper and more passionate, shall still live, but all unnameable vices are doomed, for they cannot be near Christ. Christ shall sit at the marriage feast still, and make the water-pots blush with wine. All such things as these shall last; but the sound of the harlot shall cease. Signed and sealed with a pure democracy, true love shall last; constant with passionate amorousness; rejoicing in perfect equality as to means of culture.

Finally, think what you will of the two religions, you are bound to believe this—that what is potential

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in them both must survive. Work out the teaching of the Koran and the teaching of the Gospel. Array before you the things of this world, and ask what says Mohammed to them, and what says Christ. See which is possible for you to sign. And, when the task is finished, what will be left for those who believe in the true Christian faith? Liberty, wisdom, knowledge, tolerance, purity, piety, peace! And what is the lot of the Christian man? To live in lovingness with all men, to force his way upon no man, to use only for his weapon the "Word," which was "with God in the beginning;" his means of pulling down the strongholds of error being the simple proclamation of the truth. And when these things shall be, then shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of the Lord God, and of His Christ.

Thus, then, I have endeavoured to do justice to a great religion, a religion that has made the Arab nation leap into a large, full, and noble life; but which, at the same time, is rushing on, and is doomed to pass away. The Christian religion is a universal solvent, which shall take into itself all the good of every other religion, and by-and-by abolish the evil in them all. Its kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and of its dominion there shall be no end.

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CHRIST INCREASES: MOHAMMED DECREASES.

Morning, September 24th, 1876.

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."—JOHN xviii. 36.

IT is the duty, of course, of all wise and considerate people to separate from any religion the follies and errors that may accompany it. The mistake of St. Bartholomew, the fires of Smithfield—these things were not the outcome of religion, but of fanaticism. They are not to be charged upon the Christian Religion. Neither is it right to make the religion of Mohammed answerable for the beastly atrocities of the Turks, or for the disgraceful conduct of their rulers. And, lest in the heat and passion of righteous indignation you should be

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tempted to do so, we were pointing out to you last Sunday what of good there was in the Mohammedan religion, and what of evil; what was of permanence, and what was fleeting, "passing away." We ventured to think there are things contained in it which make it necessary that the fate which John the Baptist saw of himself, must be the fate of Mohammed as compared with the faith of Jesus Christ,—"He must increase, but I must decrease."

I have no part with those who are for ever calling Mohammed a "false prophet." He was false in the sense in which all teachers are false—that is, they see not the *whole* of a thing, and *cannot* see it. But, false in the sense that he himself was an impostor? Impossible! We could not think worthily of a God who had suffered so much of the world to be guided by utter mist. When we remember that there are more men believing in the "gospel by Mohammed" than any other people in the world; and when we remember how his gospel woke religious enthusiasm in an obscure and barbarous people; we can but conclude that God's word came to the Arab nation through the voice of Mohammed. And the religion he taught, as compared to anything he found in his neighbourhood before he taught it, was as light in darkness,

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life in death. For these Arabs were idolators, walking in a stupid ritualism. They had got a great black stone, which they said had fallen from heaven, and round about this stone they marched, and bowed, and kneeled, and drivelled. This wretched idolatry could produce nothing noble; for out of stones comes not bread of any kind. Into the midst, then, of this wretched idolatry, there came this great strong man, who saw as clear as though he beheld personally, the One God, One Only. Having seen all that comes of many gods —for many gods must be false gods—he set this one principle down of a Cardinal God, One Only Great.

His religion related to human duty, and was a grand proclamation of submission to a higher power. And therein he taught the supreme doctrine of Christianity; for, whether you call it obedience or submission, whether you bow down under a compulsion that cannot be resisted, or obey from a sweet loving unwillingness to do anything else than the will of God, the greatness of the Mohammedan creed is the supremeness of the Christian faith. It has been well said that "Mohammedanism is confused Christianity:" confused, dyed, deformed, dipped in the errors of sensuous humanity.

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Now, I want to point out to you one or two other matters in the same direction. This grand principle of submission to God, based upon the thorough sovereignty of the Almighty, produced, as it always does, what we call "fatalism." Of course there are metaphysical debates, of not much worth, about "free-will," and so on. But it is no use our discussing that question, because it has been discussed before by greater men than you and I. The *supreme* men of the world have discussed this question, the men who, like comets, come but now and then; men who, like mountain tops, are far away from little people like us—*they* have discussed it all before. They have brought their contributions to it, the like of which have not been brought to any other question; yet they could not settle it. Leaving it where it was, they come to this—We are all under necessity, we can do nothing; all is ordered beforehand; man has no freedom whatsoever—and, on the other hand, man can go wrong *if he likes*, or he can stand up like the angels! Both can be proved. And yet, if you go into deep argument, Fate wins. The question of the co-existence of Fate and Free-will can never get any further than it has got. You had better give it up. Gymnastics of the intellect are lawful for the

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strengthening thereof; but, when you come to practice them *too* much, they become mischievous. That to which the men of a Church or nation most lean, determines its character and fate.

If you ask me if I believe in fate, I say, With all my soul! Or, if I believe in free-will?—With all my heart and mind! If men were wise, they would find no difficulty about life if they would *live.* For instance, I act as though there were no ruling destiny. I know there *is;* but I act as though there were not. Again, I go about the world, and feel myself but as a bending reed, blown by the wind in its might and power. I acknowledge both, but the degree to which I feel them is another thing. Stop me, at one time, and ask me the question—Do you believe in fate? I say, Surely. Do you believe that God is all in all? Certainly. Stop me, at another time, and ask me—Do you believe that man has freedom of movement, origination, spontaneity of action? I do. Then you hold them both? Decidedly. Do you feel them *equally?* Ah! that is a different thing.

Go to a man one day when the heavens are obscure, and the clouds are low, and faith is faint and hope is gone, and mischance and death have chilled his life, and the light of his eyes has fled,

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and riches have taken to themselves wings, and the world is full of mist and darkness, and fog, and the lights are low, and the stars are gone, and God's face is dim, and the world-to-come a peradventure —ask this lonely man, sitting amidst the ruins of all that his heart desires, if he believes in fate? He not only believes it, but he *feels* it! When he tries to erect himself—like a bulrush the proud man is bowed. Ask him if he feels fate—he feels *naught else.* He asks for the minor key; his cheek is wet with tears, and his constant cry is, "Man is like the grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cut down and withereth."

But leave him, and go your way, and return after awhile to the same man—and then you say, "Is this the same?" Yes, but now the sun is bright. There has been birth in the house, instead of death—"Unto us a child is born"—and you find gladsomeness and music. The stars are bright, the Heavenly Child shines clear in hope, and the man is strong in faith. All things that his hands have touched have prospered; the seed has come up, the harvest has ripened, and the man is surrounded with happiness and plenty. Ask him what he feels to-day? Freedom, and glory, believing that what he beholds is a shining path that leads from earth to God.

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Ask him *now*, "Do you believe in fate?" "Oh, yes, yes!" But ask him that question in the time of sorrow, and he will say, "Alas! *I must.*"

Now, this feeling varies in individuals and in nations. There are some men who are *bowed down* by fate, because they feel it *always*, constantly. Thus you may notice that men of one creed are very much alike in feeling. Feeling must vary a great deal according to the creed a man holds. Now, the Mohammedan creed is this—there is but one God, and man must bow and submit to Him. That is undeniable truth, but when insisted on too much, it may chill and produce inactivity and shortness of life. Whensoever fate chills a man or a nation; whenever, laying its chill hand on a people, it makes them seek for a marvel or go hunting for a miracle; when it makes everything appear to them as ordained by God, instead of by the will of man; then this undue feeling becomes an evil.

The consequence is, that when Mohammed first proclaimed that grand and glorious creed, it spread extensively, and he had many followers; but when their first love died down, then this undue prominence given to fate began to bring lethargy, dulness, slowness, tediousness, and monotony. Now, sitting

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still, means rust and dust; therefore this undue place given to submission was a sign of decay. It is a creed that depresses men too much. In the East, we find submission, unquestioning obedience, dreary monotony, fusty antiquity, unchanging life; no to-morrow; no newness; no rash fearlessless of life. (It is only when we get to the West, that we get change and newness. There the old order passes away giving place ever to the new.) By making man constantly feel himself to be nothing, nothing is the result; and if you watch that people after its forces have been spent, you will see it sink down, and settle into a monotonous incapacity for improvement. When once that happens, its day is done, and cannot be renewed. So the life of the Mohammedan religion is doomed, because it contains within itself a spirit which disinclines the nation for movement and for change.

Now, the Christian religion just as much teaches fate; but it does not make it dominant. No doubt the sense of sin gives ofttimes to the Christian an expression of sadness. Take the Liturgy of the Church of England; it is touching, gentle, pathetic, sweetly sad. A breeze, as it were, of the spirit of exile is felt through the whole of it; it is the cry of those who are away in Babylon and who find it

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hard to sing the Lord's song there. All this is born of man's sinfulness. For, as the mother's condition during child-bearing often determines the mood of the child for ever; as her frights, and fear, and melancholy, are communicated to the child, so the Church or creed is ofttimes tainted by the sinfulness of men, and the Liturgies of the Church are determined by the cries which come from man's burdened soul. But the *spirit* of the Christian religion itself, is strong, cheerful, forward. Unencumbered by law regulations, altars, priests, and all other foolishness, the Christian religion can never get old; it renews its youth continually. It is good in all lands, because it carries no baggage, and wants no porters; all it wants is within itself. Though there be some who seem to have a large quantity to carry with them—rags, and bags, and bones—the true religion itself wants none of these things.

It teaches little; its faith is simple—there are but two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." Is that all? *All.* "On these two commandments hang *all* the law and the prophets." But, unlike Jesus Christ, who, laying down no law, only principles,

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and leaving the world to settle those principles after he had left them—in the religions of Moses and Mohammed, the lawyer and the divine are combined, and under them no change is possible, except it be towards decay. It is not possible for any of these laws to last, and no mere form of religion can ever be eternal. Therefore the Mohammedan religion must pass away, because it mixes up principles and regulations, eternal things and temporary things, things from the throne of God and things from the artist—little "views" and imagery, little arrangements which have very little to do with religion at all, principles which are eternal, deep, significant, and small rules about pigeons, doves, rams, lambs, and bulls, and foolish things of that kind; the deep loves of the soul and the eternal verities of God, with little bills and regulations of conduct.

Now, unless a religion can disentangle itself from this mere law business, its life is as determined as its boundaries are. The Christian religion is distinguished for having nothing to say upon these things at all. To all these necessary evils Christ has but one answer—"Who made me a divider amongst you? Take your goods away. Don't come pestering me about dividing inheritances.

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Don't come troubling me about Cæsar; Cæsar is quite wise enough to see to his own affairs. Let go. I am God's Son. I preach eternal things, and none other. I bring you bread from heaven; bake it where you will. I go for eternal principles; let them foster themselves where they can." For to suppose that Christ laid down laws, in the sense that Moses did, is altogether a mistake. "My kingdom is not of this world. About these things did the Gentiles seek. I know nothing about them. My work is in the spirit of man. Take no thought for to-morrow, saying, What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed? The Gentiles do that." So the Christian religion, having nothing to do with these things, secures to itself, not only length of life, but universality of faith. It has nothing to say of constitutions or institutions; it is neither monarchical nor republican. It lays down no rule about these things, though the spirit and temper which it enjoins must lead man to such and such institutions, rather than to others.

When you set the Mohammedan religion, with its laws and principles, side by side with the Christian religion, which has not laws, but only principles, you see you cannot prolong the life of the one, nor put

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into it the life of the other. And whether, when we pray to God, we should uncover our heads or cover them?—for now, in these little trumpery days of feminine foolishness, it gets to be a very important point to know whether you should cover your head or not; kneel or bow, go half under the book-board at the name of Christ, or simply incline the head—but, if you go to God with these little questions, you will get the same answer as in the days of Christ, "Deepen your reverence, enlarge your knowledge, and then go according to feeling." The Christian requires to have no stated hours of prayer, no stated hours of fasting, dictated to him; he wants no laws about dress, and the clipping of beards, which Moses had to give to his regiment, in order to keep them under his government. Therefore, the Mohammedan creed appears to be a doomed one, inasmuch as it is under the necessity of mixing up with divineness little questions that should be left to wise men's discretion, that discretion springing from the love of God in the heart.

It must go, also, because there is no provision for tolerance in it, and, therefore, it will never be able to govern mixed populations. It is impossible to follow the Koran, and be tolerant. Heaven is

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promised to him who dips his sword in the blood of the unbelievers; he is the darling of paradise, he shall be honoured. Tolerance, with them, means unfaithfulness. But turn to Christ; see him tolerant to all, bringing all men to him by suasion; sheathing the sword, and using in its stead argument and persuasion. The only coals he heaps upon the heads of his enemies, is in doing them good, returning evil by blessing. The Christian religion can rule over all, because it rules by truth, and not by anger. "Ye know not what spirit ye are of," said Christ, "The Son of Man came to save, not to destroy." Tolerance is the necessary outcome of Christian principles; therefore Christ's religion can live side by side with the Jew and the Pagan. It can live side by side with all people and creeds, using no violence, but doing justice, and giving perfect equality to all. The Mohammedan creed cannot do this; it is unable to do justice, except to its own people; and woe to a creed, when we must disbelieve it, in order to do justice and judgment.

One thing more. The Mohammedan religion, by not freeing itself from all political elements, condemns itself to a comparatively short life. The Christian religion—that is, as taught by Christ

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—does free itself from all political elements whatsoever. It was able to live under the Roman empire; it can shelter itself anywhere; it can live in any climate. Like an Englishman, it bears exposure under Indian suns, and in Polar cold still retains its vitality. Jesus Christ freed religion altogether from political elements, and it was because of this freedom, that the ecclesiastical order sprung up. For if you watch the history of the middle ages, you will see that it was this freedom from politics that enabled ecclesiastics to become strong; and the Pope rose to his high position, through his non-connection with politics. But, when the Pope mixed himself up with politics, then he doomed himself to a shorter life than if he had kept himself the mere Head of the Church. All these things are doomed to pass away.

Amongst us, who are Protestants of Protestants, Dissenters of Dissent, it is the more clear; because we have no priests; nor have we need for them. We want them not, and look upon them as parasites, as a sort of insect feeding upon the tree of life. That the political alliance is expedient, at certain times of the Church's history, we may admit; but that it is doomed, we are certain. Thus you see that the religion of Jesus

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Christ was founded without any connection with political elements, and the great point is to keep it free. In Italy they have a free Church in a free State. In Germany they are struggling for the same thing. It is a struggle difficult for an Englishman to understand. It is the setting free of religion from political elements, and no man doubts, except perhaps the Roman Catholic, that the march of true religion depends upon its freedom from political connection.

The Mohammedan has his Sultan and Caliph in one person ; and, though these curious productions called sultans might drink themselves drunk with wine, they were the heads of the Church. Of course we are not smiling at them ; for in this country, we have had George IV. and Charles II. in the same position. You have got the thing mixed in Mahommedanism, and I don't see how you can separate Church and State. But, with this book in the hand, it is possible. A man shall take up the New Testament with the words of Christ, and shall say, "Cæsar shall get his taxes, and no more." But, with the Koran in your hand, and the sword by your side and in your heart, I see not how they can be severed.

There are very many matters to be added, but I

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see some of you are getting weary. Nevertheless, they are deep questions of our time; things that shake the nations, and are to shake the world; for of Christ it is proclaimed, "He shall smite the nations with the sword of his mouth." So, then, do all justice to Mohammed as a great prophet and teacher; admitting his faults, but looking at them as the least part about him, provided there be the constant following after righteousness, and the constant struggle after God; remembering how, in the Old Testament, David was said to be a man after God's own heart—that sinful, lustful, passionate-hearted man; sinning so deeply, but turning back to God with equal power.

So, admit Mohammed's faults; and he is not alone in them, for have not others found that revelation comes handy when desire has gone before? When one wants a decision, he can get one. When we want to see light, we are apt to look through our own windows; for, as Henry VIII. said, "How the gospel light doth dawn through Anne Boleyn's eyes!" Yet, with all his faults, Mohammed was the teacher of a sublime doctrine; and even his heaven and hell set forth the principle of cause and consequence. He was a true prophet, though sinful; a true prophet, though partial; but

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one of whom we must say, "Thou must decrease:" and of Him, the Son of God, what shall we say? "Thou must increase." All kingdoms are Thine, O King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!

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CREEDS OF TO-DAY.

Morning, August 8th, 1875.

FOLLOWING our usual custom, once a year, we will look this morning at the movements of the ecclesiastical and theological life by which we are surrounded. Not that from them or through them we can learn what is true; but because by them we can judge of that current of men's thoughts in which is involved all future change, and also see wherein that current justifies the aims that for many years we have held. And as we judge these things that are around us by certain principles, let me remind you what some of those principles are. Let it, then, be clearly understood that the one great desire of my life is to diminish the importance in men's and women's eyes of the greater part of what is called theology—to diminish the foolish anxiety with which people want to know whether

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they believe in the personal existence of the Devil, or the eternity of punishment, or in the procession of the Holy Ghost, or whether Christ in his last agony was so deserted by God that he ceased to be Divinity, and whether, therefore, having ceased for a time to be possessed of Divinity, he was capable of offering that atonement which was essential and necessary for the salvation of the world. All that can be said upon these things has been said, and to this effect—that no two people agree upon any one of them scarcely; and it is almost time we turned away from a large part of such chaff-cutting, and sought after those things that make for the glory of God, the well-being of life, universal charity, and, ultimately, for universal peace.

We are justified in the secondary importance we attach to these matters; and the grounds are these —That men count one another really good men, and members of the universal Church, by the things in which they agree, and not by the things in which they disagree. No large-hearted man, if he were making a book of saints—if he is outside that monopoly called the Romish Church—would make it on a theological principle. If he did, he must include opposites and contradictions. His saints may believe in the Unity of God, or the Trinity of

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God; they may believe in a personal Devil, or go without one; they may believe in the eternity of punishment, or no punishment at all; they may be Arminian or Calvinistic, and yet they are all put down as eminent Christians. It is the things in which they agree that give them their pre-eminence; and these things are charity, righteousness, justice, temperance, humility, trust in God, love to man. And therefore, when a Dean of the Established Church pronounces panegyrics upon a Presbyterian, or when the same Dean comes down and glorifies a Baptist tinker, and does his very best to put them in the book of the saints, and establish them amongst the demi-gods of the day, it is very clear that he regards the points of difference between his church and their churches as of little consequence.*

What a number of things go overboard in such a case! Divine right of episcopacy, the essentialness of infant baptism, ordination rites and privileges—all these sink into insignificance the moment we admit an opponent to be of the universal Church to which belonged Baxter, who now inherits that "everlasting rest" of which he so sweetly discoursed.

* The reference is to the Very Rev. A. P. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, who had praised John Knox in Scotland and John Bunyan at Bedford.

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I am surprised that some people are so anxious about little theological differences ; that in choosing ministers they are so anxious as to whether they believe this or that scrap or rag of theology. What they ought to do is to get at the *spirit* of the man, and not go curiously inquiring what scraps of theological patchwork he holds. It is time some of us had done with these things, unless we wish to have to write over a large part of our work these words, " I have labored in vain."

You will see that, strictly speaking, we are, with regard to these things—at least, *I* am—latitudinarian. That is a word in bad odour ; therefore I think there must be some good in it ! " Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." If you would be latitudinarian, you will enjoy the privilege of having a large number of people speak ill of you. We might conveniently divide people into three groups. There are the Authoritative people ; the Rationalists ; and there are people of a medium quality, who lie for the present between the two.

Of course, the great *authoritative* church is the Romish Church. We have little to do with that. I would as soon think of spending time to try and keep you from rushing abroad to bow down before

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the old wooden god Odin, as I would think of entering into a serious argument to prove that the Pope is not infallible. An infallible Pope! It is simply the most convenient way of proclaiming an authoritative Church.

With regard to our friends the Ritualists, there is very little to be said. I am not one of those who join in the vulgar cry against them; because every man who values such matters, endeavours to bring his church to that form of the truth which seems to him the highest. The Ritualist, holding, as he has a right to do, the doctrine of the Real Presence, makes all things significant of that marvellous doctrine. How far he is in accordance with the law, must be settled by that most curious of all creatures in the land—the reverend lawyer; such a remarkable person, for instance, as Judge Phillimore, who, sitting in the seat of the lawyer, dispenses the creed of the Church; who, having been brought up in the human learning of the law, settles whether there is a Real Presence in the Eucharist; and decides whether the real personal presence of the Devil is possible, and, if it were necessary, could perhaps determine Satan's physiognomy. Whether the Ritualists are right or wrong is a matter of law; the Courts are open, and they can implead one another as much

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as they like. But the zeal with which these Christians go to law is edifying!

Theological life may be divided like a Continental Assembly, which has its "right centre" and its "left centre." There is the Roman to the right; and there to the left centre, is the Ritualist of England —holding a great deal that "the right" holds, but still not quite willing to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome, nor prepared quite for the infallibility of the Pope, nor to give up the marriage of young women, and accept celibacy for the clergy.

Now we come to the intermediate body—that body that is considered to be (in their own eyes) Evangelical; peculiarly orthodox; free from superstition on the one hand, and from reason—I mean rationalism—on the other; a great body of people who, refusing to believe in the infallibility of the Pope, set up the infallibility of the Scriptures, and *that* infallibility of the Scriptures as interpreted by *their* leaders, and, too often, by *themselves;* who believe that in the Scriptures they have the whole body of truth, a system of Divinity, the final Word of God, the full Word of God, the *only* Word of God. But, of course, in so mixed a multitude as this, the differences of shade are infinite.

In this body, a stand has been made on behalf of

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doctrines, and I take great pleasure in the stand on behalf of the Devil recently made by the eminent legal authority of whom I have previously spoken. That combination of the wig of the judge with the hands of the clergyman said he "was of opinion that the avowed and persistent denial of the existence and personality of the Devil did, according to the law of the Church, as expressed in rubric and canon, constitute an 'evil liver' and a 'depraver of the Book of Common Prayer,' and was sufficient to warrant the clergyman in not administering the Holy Communion."* For the decision on behalf of Satan by the reverend lawyer —that legal divine—I care little; for until men renounce the *works* of the Devil, it is of little consequence whether they renounce *him* or not. It is, however, a useful decision, as destroying that mischievous doctrine that a layman need not believe what the clergyman is bound to believe.

I have no time now to call your attention to what is being done with regard to the doctrine of Atonement. One day I may call attention to what

* The reference is to the suit in the Court of Arches, promoted by Mr. Henry Jenkins, against the Rev. Flavel Cook. See the newspapers of the time; for instance, the *Spectator* of July 24th, 1875.

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a brother minister of this town has been discoursing on the matter; but for the present it may pass.

The next great movement upon which I wish to speak, and with all candour, is the attempt which has been made to "revive religion"—made on a large scale, and with all the improvements of the nineteenth century.* Some one has had the incredible absurdity, and the infinite audacity to scribble me a letter, to which he had not the courage to put his name, and in which he says that some remarks of mine upon this great revival of religion, arise from "envy" and "jealousy." The exquisite absurdity; the blindness to character; the mistake as to motive, of that letter! Ah, let it pass. I have some few words to say, however, with regard to the method of that revival, and a few words with regard to the results. A large number of good people in this country of course approve of it on principle; and a large number tolerate it in practice, because they think it is, as they put it, "calculated to do good."

I oppose the method because the whole system is a deliberate appeal to the emotions, prior to an appeal to the reason; it is a reversal of the correct

* The campaign of Messrs. Moody and Sankey.

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order of things. As to getting a multitude together and playing upon their feelings, that is easy and cheap to those who are masters of the art of oratory, independently of the subject discoursed upon. He knows nothing of the art of oratory who cannot arrange, in a committee-room or in a vestry, to have a multitude in tears or on their feet shouting or cheering, weeping or fainting, at a given moment. But, in all true religion, and in all wise teaching of religion, the feelings are not appealed to before the reason is convinced. Look at those curious passages in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which, with a firm hand, he repressed all emotion which seemed to have run beyond the intelligence and the reason. When any mere enthusiast pressed to Christ, he received him with a seemingly cold, chill hand. When the young man ran to him, and fell down and adored him with all the rapture of a revival enthusiasm, what did Christ say to him? "One thing thou lackest." And when that woman broke out in a rapture, crying, "Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked," what did the Master say? "Yea, rather blessed are they that know the will of God, and do it." Although there was a passionate heart, and an enthusiasm so deep that its splendid

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language almost defies the touch of intelligence sometimes, the Master uniformly and quietly repressed the enthusiasm and the emotion of those who came to him, until it was accompanied by intelligence and reason. This it is, then, that constitutes our broad objection to the method of the revival.

As a matter of taste, I do not admire it. There have been revivals in which some one man has stormed across the country, and in his own rude, rough, unorganized way, stirred the hearts of the people, as when Whitfield preached in Moorfields, or when John Wesley, from his father's grave, defied ecclesiastical order, and ate the shew-bread rather than people should starve. In those times there was an irregularity which justified what was done. But now, in this nineteenth century, these are the days of machinery, and evangelists require people to go before them. The John the Baptist of modern evangelists is the bill-sticker, the advertiser, and the printer; and the waters are stirred now, not by an angel from above, but by "agitation." The bill comes in for thousands of pounds to "prepare the way" for the evangelists. To bill-stickers, so much; and advertising, so much! Well, that may be the proper nineteenth century mode of getting ready

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for an apostle, or "preparing" for evangelists; but it savours of—well, we will not say "the world."

It is a matter of taste. If we could get over that, another very serious objection to some of us is this: it is—we will not say dishonest, but intolerable to support men who are teaching what we believe to be some of the most mischievous doctrines that ever corrupted Christianity, because we think at the same time it may do some moral or spiritual good. And anything more offensive than the way in which the doctrine of the Atonement has been laid down in this town it is impossible to conceive. It is the worst form of it, dragged about in the vulgarest manner. It is the most offensively objective view of the blood of Christ that was ever taken, and is given forth with the indelicacy of a butcher, and with the loathesomeness of one who has never yet escaped from a belief that because the Jew of old may have sprinkled his altars with blood, therefore the spiritual religion requires that Christ should sprinkle his blood on Calvary in the same sense, for the same reason, with the same object, and to the same God. I do not mean to say that the Hebrews did not worship the same God that I do; but they worshipped a different conception of God.

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So, if any of you ask me if I went, I say, "Did you expect I should go? Did you expect me to go and hear it taught that God the Father, the All-Lover, could not and would not forgive, until this blood had been shed?—not in its high, spiritual sense; not until this fiery will and these passionate desires had been shed, and God reigned supreme in His Son, as He must do in us; but that this red blood, glorious in its working, mean in its material, must actually be shed and spilled before the fiery throne of God could be so sprinkled and pacified that a trembling sinner might stand safely and acceptably before it! I go with you to hear that? I would as soon go with you to bring Jupiter back again into the world, or to set up the god Odin, and the worship of the gods of old Greece. Go to hear that! Count me an atheist, blot God out, away with His throne, trouble me not with the Gospel, if it be to believe that the All-Lover and the All-Father, Spirit of spirits, whose name is Love, and who loves every man at every moment of his life, whether that life be sinful or lovely, requires the blood." No, I didn't go.

"Well," you may say, "what you remark about it is true, but——" But, what? "It was accompanied with a good deal that was 'calculated to do good.'"

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So was the worship of the gods of Greece; holy men have entered the temple of Apollo, and noble men have been where Jupiter reigned.

What is the effect of these doctrines? Why, the old story, never to be forgotten. Johnson was right when he said that every corruption of Christianity was "an attempt to put something in the place of morality." That is so; for from the infallible Pope down to the lowest Evangelicalism, there is perpetually an attempt to rest upon something outside; to be clothed with garments which they did not spin; to have a righteousness imparted to them which they did not win; to be washed with the blood of Christ, as a garment might be with fuller's earth, and be cleaned in the process. Spiritual religion is this—that in the spiritual organs of a man—in his conscience, in his heart—a work shall go on that shall change the man, and bring him at last into obedience to the will of God and into spiritual likeness to Him.

The accompaniments of this revival I do not admire; especially those "requests for prayer." I have read of a closed door, and of praying in secret to a Father who seeth in secret; and I know that deep feeling and good taste require that sorrow shall be poured out in secret. But these are days of

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large forces, and "organizing" for everything; and so the Evangelist is organized for before he comes, and prayers are organized when he arrives. In a scientific age like this, when things are calculated with such nicety, the prayer put up by a friend may do nothing; but when the prayer is put up by a whole hall-full of people, what a force it commands! Heaven's gate might hold out against my prayer; but not against ten thousand prayers. So Heaven's gate is battered by a number of prayers, and people send up their supplications in united thousands. There is a small magazine in which a number of these requests for prayer are preserved. One is for two sisters, "that the Lord would now appear for them, and find them a home: they are wholly cast on the Lord." God forbid that I should think they were not sincere. I am not censuring the sisters for sending the prayer; but I am blaming the theological teachers who could teach them to do so. "Wholly cast upon the Lord!" Where could they be better? If they were wholly cast upon the Lord, why did they need prayer from ten thousand people when the Lord *knew* that? I like not the noisy spirit of this thing, the ostentation, and the vulgar attempt to augment forces by getting ten thousand women in

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a cattle market,* to pray together for these two sisters who had "wholly cast themselves on the Lord." Again, prayers were requested "for a young Christian in great difficulties that appear to be insurmountable." I can't tell the nature of the "difficulties"—they may have been pecuniary—but why should "a young Christian" carry them to the people? I don't say it is cant; but it savours fearfully of it.

If all the humourists that have ever lived in England had clubbed together to write the next request they could not have equalled it in unction, foolishness, and absurdity: it is, "Prayers are requested for a gentleman purchasing an estate, that he may not make it an idol." I hope you won't suspect that I made this myself; for I have not genius enough to equal it. "Prayers requested for a gentleman purchasing an estate, that he may not make it an idol." Had I known that gentleman, I might have been of use to him. I should have said to him, "Don't purchase it, then you won't run any risk." I must say that a piece of more fulsome egregious cant was never turned out before God and man than by the unctuous, greasy, vulgar,

* The "Bingley Hall," Birmingham, built for cattle shows, agricultural exhibitions, etc.

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ostentatious fellow who thus informed the assembled multitude that he was "purchasing an estate." I would have read to that individual what Jesus said to the young man: "Go, sell all that thou hast," that it may not be made an idol. If that man had felt his danger he would have found other ways of fighting it than advertising it. If that man felt he was in peril he either would not have bought the estate, or, with the large hand of charity, he would have taken care that it did not become an idol. He could have prayed to his God day by day; he could have given to the poor; or, if he was sincere in his desire to learn a spiritual lesson, to have wealth and not to worship it, then, in secret and in silence, by daily exercises and constant repression, he would have held that estate, and it would not have been an idol. It was a wonderful request. Whether the man has purchased the estate, or whether the idolatry remains, I don't know.

Then prayers were requested "for a dear father, who has been a chapel-goer for many years, and is still an unsaved sinner." Ah, "Honour thy father and thy mother." But that does not mean putting them in a pillory. Here is a poor old chapel-goer who is still an unsaved sinner; his name is not given; but probably there were several at the

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prayer-meeting who knew who was meant. Is not this a delicious piece of humility on the part of some son or daughter, sitting down and scribbling a paper to be read to the multitude! "For a dear father"—Oh, yes—"who has been a chapel-goer for many years, and is still an unsaved sinner." I have heard of two who went to pray; one of them prayed, "I thank thee that I am not as other men are; I am a saved sinner, and go to chapel;" but the other smote upon his breast and cried, "Have mercy upon me, O God, a miserable sinner." Yet that little Pharisee—I don't know whether it was a son or a daughter—placarded "dear father," as "an unsaved sinner," admitting, with a fine candour, that he had been "a chapel-goer for many years." What a fine fling that is, at the chapel! what a glorious statement of ineffectual means, and how little one can depend upon external means of grace!

Now, do you admire all this? Do you think that this sort of thing will promote the godliness that is lowly, the Christianity that is meek? The method of it seems to me wrong; the doctrines of the movement false; the taste of it infamous; the results of it—pride, arrogance, and productions of the sort I have read to you—one of the unloveliest

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posies I have ever gathered of all the weeds that grow upon the dung-hill; rank with fanaticism, disgraced with materialism of the basest kind, and promoted by the most vulgar bell-ringing and sending round of the crier that the world ever saw. If you count *that* as the result of "envy" and "jealousy," so be it.

I have referred to these things, as illustrative of what movements are being made in the great divisions into which the theological world may be divided.

We have little time left to look at the Rationalists. The real movement of Rationalism is to depart from Christianity as a complete system of life or ethics; or of the truths of eternity; or of the things touching God. Some of you look shocked. Well, how many of you could pass muster in an examination upon Christianity as a complete system? None of you that I know of. There are none of you who could practice the ethics Christ taught if you tried —that is, if you take them in their literalness, or unless you make such wide allowances as really amount to alterations. The fact is, the world is fast passing away from systematic religion—that is, from theologies that affect to be complete and final statements of what relates to the infinite, or even

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complete statements of that which relates to human duty and human holiness.

With regard to myself, I am more than ever convinced that the best thing nowadays is to organize men—not for the defence of the Devil, and his personality; nor to make a stand on behalf of the Trinity; nor to do something for Heaven; but to bring together the scattered forces of charity; to gather together men and women so that the warmth that is diffusive from the heart may uphold and alter. This is the most important of all—to gather men together to examine on what basis morality is to be placed when tradition is decaying, when the old authority is impossible, when no form of religion can be allowed to claim its exclusive right over our own judgment and conscience, and when we deny that a thing is made right or wrong by being made the law. A very pressing question, which must, before long, come up before the nations is this: In the decay of the traditional faith on which morals have been based, what basis is to be put before men, so that they may still believe that there is right and there is wrong, and still be able to judge *what* is right and what is wrong? Just as in politics the great question will be how to get a good authority, and a wise reverence for that

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authority, out of the large liberty that modern times give us; so, with regard to religion, the first great question is, on what shall we base, for the future, our ideas of right and wrong, and how obtain the sanction of law in these matters?

On these questions, if strength should serve and inclination should abide, we may enter in the future. They are questions of more importance than the personality of the Devil, or the procession of the Holy Ghost, or many of those things about which our fathers fought, shed tears, and died.

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CHRISTIAN RATIONALISM.

Morning, September 12th, 1875.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."—ACTS xvii. 11.

INSTEAD of the faith of the Rationalist being feebler than that of those who are orthodox, it is deeper, stouter, tenderer, more true. Instead of having less piety among us, than exists among others, we need more, and if God is good to us he will grant us more. That large, latitudinarian faith, which I glory in and utterly profess, requires more abnegation and self-denial in its quiet willingness to be damned even, if so God's glory can be promoted, than to belong to the "chosen people," the "elect" saints, who would shut us out from the mercies of God. As robust Englishmen, we believe that *common* sense is by far the most valuable, and

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that without it devotion becomes a superstition, piety a travail, and the word of God a kill-joy. It is religion without common sense that hides the blue heavens, makes fools of men and imbeciles of women, and thinks the world is covered with darkness and is alien to the life of the spirit and the word of God. Now, Cardinal Manning—formerly of the Church of England, but now a Cardinal in the Church of Rome—has given us a definition of Rationalism so brief and sound, that we thank him for what he has done. Not that he *meant* it, but it is good to find the truth, however absurd the use it may be turned to. Cardinal Manning says that "A good definition of Rationalism is that it makes reason to be the test of truth. Even in revelation, reason is the measure by which the doctrines of Christianity are tested, so that what is received by reason is accepted, and what commends itself not to reason is rejected." The Cardinal's definition answers most admirably, though he intends it as a reproach. What reason approves shall be received, and that only. Certainly; assuredly, oh, Cardinal! That is the stone upon which all belief must be founded.

Let us examine this matter. We declare that reason is the ultimate test of truth, and we declare

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that it ever must be. A Roman Catholic, who has been brought up a Roman Catholic from his childhood, may not see that. His reason is lost to him, for he has had no occasion to exercise it. For reason, like the power of swimming, can never be well developed except you go into deep waters. What good is his reason to him, seeing he uses it not? But he *has* it, nevertheless.

You cannot over-estimate the power of education to make children believe anything you wish them to believe. There is no creed so absurd that a child cannot be brought up to believe it. And he may hold it to his dying day. "Oh," you say, "these people never exercise their reason." No; how should they? They never had the chance. Instead of praising, however, I pity any man or woman who believes anything without a reason. When I was in America, I had some talk with the nineteenth wife of Brigham Young. *You* cannot imagine how a woman could consent to be the nineteenth wife of any man. You are exceedingly surprised that any woman of intelligence should suffer herself to be so degraded. Why? Can you show me anything else which that woman could have done? "She might have reasoned," you say. No, she had been so brought up that she never had

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any call, occasion, or opportunity for reason. So it may be with many people with regard to their religious opinions. Bred in them from their childhood; never going beyond the creed in which they were suckled; it is easy to say of them that "they don't exercise their reason." The wonder would be if they did.

Roman Catholics do not exercise reason, because they never can reason. But what are we poor Protestants to do? *They* are inside the Church, and we are outside. By what process am I to go into the Roman Church, except by the process of reasoning? By what process shall the Cardinal endeavour to bring me over to his opinions, except by reasoning with me? He could not drive or curse me into the Church; for "the more he called the more I should not come." Though he will declare it is for my soul's salvation that I enter that Church, and he knows that I cannot enter it without reason, yet, when I have entered it, reason must be set aside.

What is "The Roman Controversy without Reason"? That famous book is an appeal to the reason of the Protestant in favour of the Roman Church. The very fact that these men reason with me in order to save me, shows that reason is the

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ultimate test of revelation; for only by the exercise of reason can I be saved.

Would Father Newman have won the Church of Rome anything, except for reason? Possessing one of the largest intellects, what led him into the Church? Was he bullied into it? Frightened into it? No, he was *reasoned* into it. You may say his reasons were very bad. That is not the question. We apologize for *bad* reasoning, but not for reasoning. The reasons that most people give are worse than their decisions; still I don't say, "Reason not," but, "Don't reason badly." When you say, therefore, that Dr. Newman's reasons seem to you bad ones, I agree with you; but if it were not for reasoning, how could he have got into the Church? Oh, it is hard for them to say that Rationalism is a wickedness, and that the very process by which alone I can be saved is a process hostile to the faith.

Therefore, I say to all those people who talk cant about rationalism and reason, "How can I be saved without it?" Even if, after I have got into the Church, I resign my reason, still I can only get in by a gigantic act of reason. The larger the thing you ask me to believe, the more it exercises my reason. When I turn Roman Catholic, I shall

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give up reason, I shall put it aside as one of the things of the world; but am I not obliged in my secret heart to receive it as that by which alone I have been enabled to be saved? No Protestant, that I see, can become a Roman Catholic without reasoning. It is impossible to do so, without absolute refusal to think; and a refusal to think upon religious subjects is either a feebleness, a dishonesty, or an imbecility.

If, therefore, it is impossible for me, a Protestant, to become a Roman Catholic without the use of reason, I say, Where is the fairness in assailing me? Reason, rightly understood, is only listening to evidence. Probably these Cardinals want us to listen to their barrister only; to sit as jurymen and hear one eloquent speaker only, and decline to hear the other side; to have the sunshine without the shade (or, rather, the shade without the sunshine). But, shall I listen only to the Cardinal, and not to the other side? Is Luther to be dumb in order that Leo may roar? No. Both sides, or no side. If I go wrong, I prefer to go wrong with evidence. John Knox said that of two men, the one exercising his faculties honestly and arriving at error, and the other, without exercising his faculties, *stumbling* upon the truth, the former man

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is the more acceptable to God. "But, if I use my reason rightly, and——" "Stop," they say, "you must not use it at all." "But I must be convinced that this is the true Roman Church before I can enter it." So it goes. These men entered the Church by reasoning it out, they know I cannot enter it without reasoning it out; yet when I begin to reason, they condemn me, and say that revelation is higher than reason. Suppose you and I vowed to submit to the Roman Church. Do you think any intelligent Roman Catholic would receive us without asking us our *reasons* for submitting to their Church? And have they not thereby licensed the process of reasoning?

Then look at the brother of Father Newman. He is a Rationalist. He may not be as subtle as his brother, but he is pretty subtle—his eye bright, his brain good; and he is the soul of honesty. These two men did as though they had turned their backs to one another and then marched each in an opposite direction. One went his way to Authority, and the other went his way to Rationalism. And both by the same process. Most people love institutions that are in their favour; a wise man learns that the process may be one day against him, another day for him, but he does not

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vary in righteousness as the process varies in result.

We pass on. The great matter to be believed in the Roman Catholic Faith is that God has established a Church Infallible, by which this poor, miserable world may be guided into righteousness; and a means by which lost souls may be saved into the eternal bliss. Now, I confess that that proposition at first sounds somewhat likely. Looking around, and seeing the injustice that is done in the world, the hatred, the strife, the early deaths, the tempest, the pestilence, the plague—when all these are summoned to make the picture dark, then the skilful artist says, "If I did not believe in an infallible Church in the midst of all this, what could I do? For me there is either the Roman Church, into which the soul may enter and be saved, or Atheism." That seems like a great argument, and there is something in it that fascinates at first. And, looking at what the world is, I should say that it was likely there should be an infallible guidance for man; that it was likely God would tell us all that was necessary in such a way as that it should be impossible for anybody to mistake. If, a great many years ago, a man had said to me, "Don't you think it probable that this

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wicked world is under the government of God, and that He who loves the sinner has somewhere provided a guidance infallible and so plain that nobody can mistake it?" I should have said, "Yes, I think it is highly probable." If he had said to me, "Don't you think it very unlikely that if God had a letter to write to man, He would write it in such a way that no two people could understand it in the same sense?" I should have answered, "It is not likely so to be."

Oh, I must have been caught early to have been blinded by these things. When the burden of the mystery is far too great for our comprehending; when the soul is bowed down by the weight of unintelligible things, and clings and cries to God; in a moment, not of treachery to reason, but when our faith in it is shaken—we do think it likely that God would have written an infallible word which should mean the same thing to all who studied it. But now, when the facts of life are before us, there is not much time for dreaming.

What do we find? In that Book, which is read by all the Churches, and interpreted by all differently, it is written that wicked people shall be burned for evermore. One man, reading that Book, says that all the wicked shall go into everlasting

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punishment, and another man, reading the same Book, says that every soul shall ultimately be brought back to God and righteousness, to light and life and love and eternal bliss. The same Book is an authority for the baptism of children, and also teaches that none but believers shall be baptized. Everything is in the Book, and everybody has got everything out of it. All creeds have their root and source in this Book, and all have borrowed their labels out of it.

If, then, I am disposed to think it likely there should be an infallible Church, I say this infallible Church must be divine in its beauty and pureness, and free from all human feebleness and passion. Do I find that the Roman Church is that divine looking institution, such as one expected the bride of Christ to be? Nay.

So I judge by my reason. And when people tell me, "Here is an infallible Church!" I say, "Let me look." I say, "It does not seem to me to be divine at all." And so, from the fact of my examination, and as the result of what I behold, I, a Rationalist, decline that Church. Some of its history I admire; some of its doctrines I believe; what it has done for the world in its early days I bless it for; but to take refuge there, to cut off

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one's reason in order to enter it, and go into it maimed—better the old circumcision than that. I would rather sit on the grave of some old Puritan, and worship God there, than I would enter that Church.

I know what will be said, "You forget the old greatness of this Roman Church." No. But if I see a great man going down the street with a good garment on, covered with grease fallen from the candles by which he worships God—if I see a beautiful picture covered over by the smoke of incense—I say, "It is a pity." Our allegiance is spoiled, and the Church is injured when we find it indulging in superstitious folly. When you hear of a procession going down the street, with lighted candles, and a boy with a piece of brown paper to catch the wax that falls from the taper, it takes away the solemnity of the scene. So it is with most of these follies—there is too much paper, and too little wax.

If you have followed me thus far, I am sure you will be ready to say, with me, that there is and can be no real sincerity in this outcry against reason. And let us also look amongst our own brethren—our Protestant brethren—for they are as willing to stone us as the others. There are only two or

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three congregations in this town who would not be prepared to cast a stone at us. Why? "Because," they say, "you use your reason *too far*. You ought to stop." Well, I say, "Stop, *where?*" They don't like to say it—they have some remnants of the garments of modesty, or they would say, "Stop when you get where *we* are. Be moderate, and don't drink reason to excess; *we* never did." Granted, brethren; I admire your abstemiousness. You like reason in a moderate way. But who is to be the moderator? Where am I to stop? The Word of God ought to stop me, you say. Yes, but who is to settle which *is* the word of God? Ah! then you begin to stammer and hesitate. "The Church," you say. Yes; but there can be no infallible Church which may never go wrong. One sect will declare one thing, and another another. But what is the use of going over the old story? The supreme work of reason is the knowing of and keeping the word of God. But in order to know what *is* the word of God, reason must be used without fear or favour. You say God wrote these things. Let me look at the handwriting, and judge whether the sentences be indeed His word. If a letter come to me from a friend, and there are some sentences unlike his style—if

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the hand that was once the hand of love has lost the sweet cunning of friendship, and is lifted up against me—I think of the old faith, I hesitate, stop, inquire, weep, doubt, ask, and only when conviction is *forced* upon me by *reason* can I believe it. So, if I find God drawn as unjust, as willing the death of the sinner, willing that he should suffer eternal torment, I say, "Such things show that somebody has been writing between the lines. My God could not have written that. If God wrote your gospel, it is contrary to the thought of God that is in me." I will worship no God who is lower than a noble man. You and I know what beauty is in man. How lovely it is to see a man slow to anger, plenteous in mercy, quickly forgiving, gracious, long-suffering. If you say that of God, I believe you; but if you say that He punishes sinners to all eternity, and gets pleasure out of it—that He took delight in the sacrifice of rams and lambs and bulls, and afterwards in that of His own Son, and that since then He is pleased with constant prayer-meetings, I say, "Pardon me, these are not His words." Therefore, if I find that all these things are contrary to what my soul and conscience tell me God must of necessity be, then I shall forsake them. And though it may be as hard to

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forsake them as it may have been to Abraham to forsake the land of his birth, yet, when reason calls, I must forsake these false gods.

So, Lord God, Maker of that faculty by which I rise above all creatures, and come in likeness near to Thee; so reveal Thyself to me, that whatsoever is wrong in conscience may appear also wrong in Thy word; and whatsoever is untrue of Thee, help me truly to *un*believe! For, were I writing a prayer just now, I would pray for *unbelief*. Most men pray for belief; but I could write a whole book of prayers that God would be pleased to give me unbelief. O Lord, have mercy upon me, and incline my heart to *break* this law. Help me to *deny* this thing. From this doctrine, Good Lord *deliver* me—from the doctrine of eternal damnation, baptismal regeneration, and the destruction of sinners, from the belief that, since I began to speak, millions upon millions of human souls have gone down to damnation. O Lord, have mercy upon me speedily; help me, Jesus Christ, help me; Spirit of the living, loving God, save me from this. Better the fire through which Thy three children walked of old than these things. Better to be turned away, Ishmael-like, poor, dying, starved, than to be fed by false doctrines. Go, worship

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what you like, I have no taste for grotesqueness. Excuse me, if these things are true, I want them not; they are not true to me.

So, in spite of the Cardinal, I intend to use my reason. I am not going to give up reason because it takes me wrong. Some of you lately wished to know what my "views" were. Now you have got some of them. All revelation, and all that is asserted or pretended to be revelation, must be tried by reason, and that only which is *reasonable* can a reasonable man believe. Come from whom it will, this outcry against reason is an affectation, an insincerity, or an imbecility. Having got into a fog get out of it as fast as you can. I would come after you if that would save you; but I fear that then there would be only two fools in the fog. If I have failed to make these things clear to you, tell me, and I will try again. The Cardinal is content to cut off his reason. I hope it will be counted to him for righteousness. But *follow* him? No, never. I prefer the whole nature of man, and to have the distinguishing glory of man—"made in the image of God."

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BABEL AND THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS:

(LAW IN LANGUAGE).

Morning, May 16th, 1875.

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

"And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

"And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

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"So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth : and they left off to build the city." —GENESIS xi. 1–8.

THERE is a parallelism between the life of *Man*, and the life of *a* man ; and, just as the memory of one man may not be trusted, so it is with humanity. Here and there we get a large stretch of fancy over something that has been pretty nearly forgotten ; and invention is set to work to eke out what is deficient in fact. You can be supplied with the history of *anything*, because imagination never fails, though facts may be scarce. So, wise men build not their faith upon the shifting things of tradition. But I should call that man eminently foolish who should close Shakespeare, because it was doubtful how he learned his letters—whether from his mother or from his grandmother. Yet, this is what that set of people, who count themselves nearer to God than others, continually plague others to do.

Nobody knows anything about the origin of speech, and yet none are such fools as not to use speech, or not to make the most of it. And there is a pleasure in going into these old traditions—to hear what the old world has to say about that still older world, who were "all of the same lip and the same speech." It is a very curious question, but of

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no spiritual importance whatsoever. There is no need that we should have our taste destroyed, and our judgment contorted, in order to try to get to believe these old records. I would rather meet Moses fairly, and say, "I don't believe it, though you did;" than try to make Moses speak like a modern scientist. Which were better—the abjuration of Moses in some things, or, going with episcopal unction to Moses, and trying to make him a Doctor of Divinity of the modern type?

The Old Testament clearly teaches that the whole human race sprang from two people: that, to me, is very clear. The New Testament entirely understood the Old Testament to mean that; and when it tells us that "The Lord hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth," it means exactly the same thing as the Old Testament does when it starts us all from Adam and Eve. As in the Old Testament Adam is said to be our first father, so in the New Testament Christ is represented as the Head of the spiritual race. Each gives the same idea—that all mankind started from one pair. It is a curious question, and one upon which much light has not yet been shed. But I am able to attach no disturbing influences to my creed, on account of my ignorance of these things. So, while

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I know nothing about the *origin* of language, I cease not to admire its glory, or to be overcome by its majesty and poetry. Yet, of all the works of man, this study is perhaps the sublimest. As far as I can understand, the doctrine of the Bible is that all mankind started from two people. If this be so, then there must have been but one original language, and all languages must have started from that.

Now, in examining these early records of the progress of the human race, we need not be strictly chronological, nor take account of all the phrases used. The first mention of speech at any rate shows us its priceless glory, and lifts man up above all other creatures for ever and for ever. The fact that Adam gave names to the cattle shows the one supreme point in which man can never be touched by the lower creation. It is the one that justifies spiritualism, and exalts man to sonship with God. Man's spoken word corresponds to the unspoken word or thought of God. To speak the names of cattle, was a sign of man's greatness. It became clear that he wanted a sceptre. But they whom we rule with a sceptre are not those we would take to our hearts. So man was found to be lonely, and woman was made of the same nature and the same

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speech (perhaps even more profuse). So speech broadens, and the world becomes peopled, and unity of language is the necessary result. But this question of language is open to science; you can read the books on comparative philology, and compare one thing with another: life is long, and the world is not finished yet.

Men of science have studied this question, and they tell us that the many languages of the world contain within themselves evident signs of having originated from one source. Probably science will verify Genesis on this point. That the speech of man started from the small stock of noises made by sheep, lions, and other creatures; and that then, through varied circumstances and pursuits, by degrees he enlarged his store, I am afraid there is not very conclusive evidence to show. The march of that glorious study leads us, I think, rather toward the certainty of one than of many centres of creation and speech.

You must consent to be very much in the dark as to how Adam got his knowledge of speech. We know that with children, language is purely imitative; but how long it took Adam to learn his language, we cannot tell. If any one can discover it, I shall be glad to be informed—*early!* Some

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think that this marvellous history is a mere legend ; some say it is a myth ; but probably it is a bit of genuine history "with differences." For it is one of the beauties of studying men and women about you, to find that you never get at their history. Do you think it troubles me? No. There is no history that I entirely believe. There are only about two men in the world, probably, who can record a thing *exactly* as they saw it—there be many colours in the fabric and many shades. So the process of creation goes on ; and simple facts receive a deeper dye, and gather varied hues from the brush of the imagination.

What a discourse on dye-vats a man might preach! You take up a newspaper report, and you say, "Ah! that has been in the dye-vat." You can distinguish the different colours—blue, purple, pink, and so on. Now, I am not saying that those people are unveracious ; they don't know they are not stating a fact ; they mean well, but they narrate ill, and so there is "confusion of tongues." So, there are little things of local colouring in the tale of Babel which we need not take much notice of. A number of the elders of the people got together and proposed to build a city, and a tower whose top should reach unto heaven ;

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and they said, Let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly: and they had bricks for stone, and slime for mortar. These men were going to build a Babylonian city; there was no stone get-able: what was to be done? they must have bricks; so they found clay, and made bricks. Mortar they could not get; so they used the slime of the soil instead. And this tower—colossal, vast, brick-built—men have puzzled themselves over, as to how it could have been done. They confuse history with ingenuity, instead of glorifying it *as* history. Men stand and look at these ruins of old Babel, and wonder what appliances, what machinery, those men had to aid them. They had nothing but an unlimited supply of naked human force. It was done by a number of earnest men, bringing their toiling hands, and their great leisure, and their bare, unarmed strength, and piling brick on brick, until the mighty work was completed. There are other ruins, equally mighty, and there is some doubt as to which *is* the Tower of Babel; but let us hope, for the spiritual comfort of those of you that are curious, that when Mr. Smith * returns

* The late George Smith of the British Museum, author of "Assyrian Discoveries" and "The Chaldean Account of Genesis." He had been on two expeditions to Assyria, and

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from his explorations, he will be able to explain everything entirely to your satisfaction.

My faith is not built upon the bricks of Babel, or the mortar thereof. The foundations of my trust in God depend not upon the accuracy of the accounts given about that tower, or upon any other human authority. Still, in reading these old records, it is pleasant to find how, by human labour and persistent effort, without stone or mortar, these great towers were built. What was the political design in the building of them, we can only speculate about. Some of these men were ramblers and rovers, and we all know that civilisation requires that the people should be kept together. You cannot raise man to a high pass if he is lonely and alone. There is a foolish saying * that "God made the country; but man made the town." He made *both;* or, what is the same thing, He gave man the instincts and capacities which naturally lead him into cities. It is only in cities, even though they be as inelegant as this, that some of the highest things of human nature can be carried out. Oh, the country is lovely! delightful! but, if there had

afterwards died while returning from a third, laden with cuneiform inscriptions and other treasures.

* Cowper's.

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been *only* the country, there would have been no Epistle to the Romans, no Epistles to the Corinthians, no Psalms of David, no Proverbs of Solomon, no glorious temple of civilisation. Lovely the country, and sweet the sound of lambs! but, if there had been no cities, we should have had no word of Shakespeare, and no mighty strain of Paradise Lost; music would have confined itself to the shepherd's pipe, and painting would have found all its scope in a boy's caricature upon the wall.

God is the Creator, but man is the sub-creator. When God fashioned man, he put in him a spirit that should make him restless until he, too, had made his little world. Art and politics—what are they? Man says, Let me make my world, and a firmament over that world—and he, too, looks upon his work and finds it good. If David had stopped among his sheep, there had been no song of Jewry, and no Psalms. He must leave his sheep, and get him a sword; he must hear of a Goliath and go out to meet him, and he must hear the sound of organized rejoicing.

So these ancient people, fearful of getting scattered, said to one another, "Let us build a city, and a tower whose top shall reach unto heaven"—

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meaning that they would build it very, very high indeed, for exaggeration is the only method of stating adequately anything unusual. "And the Lord came down to see the city." Do any of you really believe, now, that the Lord came down as an earthly watchman, to behold that which was already known to him? It is an expression of unutterable silliness, if it be taken in its literal sense. "The Lord came down to look at the city"—just as though one should come to town! It is absurd, taken in that way. But these are only set phrases; and they answered in the old religions the same purpose that the formulæ of the physician do now, and with which he always begins his recipes. All lawyers understand these things; for they like to use the old formulæ when they want to state modern facts.

So, "The Lord came down," "Thus saith the Lord," and "The Lord spake"—all these phrases are purely formulæ. The Lord ne'er came down to look at Babel at that time, any more than he comes down to look at London now. It is simply the formula with which the thing is introduced.

The design in building the Tower of Babel was evidently to keep the people from wandering. Now, what broke it up, I cannot tell. But if, in

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order to break it up and disperse them, their language was *at once* divided—if that *was* so—it was a miracle. It is no use trying to shirk it; for it would be the sudden doing of that which history says it takes long years to accomplish. Nowadays, folk may start in a place with one language; but watch, and you will see how it keeps diverging. Within any Tower of Babel their speech will get confounded; so much so, that you would be very much confounded in trying to understand them. Go and listen to the different dialects of Warwickshire or Lancashire, and you will be confounded—you, a master of the English tongue. There are some of the people in France who are lost when they get to Paris; and there are those whose parents have paid large sums for their "learning French," who can neither write a letter nor hold any intelligible conversation in that language. What shall we do, then, with this story of Babel? Of course, those of you who reject miracles will reject it: no amount of evidence could make the thing possible to you.

To those of you who make nothing of it, I say, "My brother, *make* nothing of it." Some of you will regard it as a mythical statement of some actual part of man's history. For myself I do not

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thoroughly master what historical event happened; but I do see that a confusion of tongues would lead to the dispersion of the people, and the unity of language would bind them together. That there was some big confederacy, and that some catastrophe did happen by which they were scattered—that is clear. More than this I am not able to penetrate; more than this I have scant desire to know.

But, you may say, Why do I trouble you with these things? Having long enjoyed a complete deliverance from the melancholy bondage in which my spiritual faith was held, I do not now build my faith or fix my hopes upon the bricks of Babel or the slime thereof; nor can anything alter my certainty that whoso wants to know many languages must buy many grammars, and devote many years to the study of them. This I do know—that the process here asserted to be miraculous, is but a part of the great human story, which is being told, over, and over, and over again.

Then we pass on to one other point. The Old Testament teaches pretty clearly that man came from one stock; for it distinctly says, that after the Deluge, the human family started again from Noah. Whatever views we may have about the Deluge—its waters are not here now—we know that it was

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not sufficient to drown love, or to put an end to trust; it rose not to the eternal throne of God; it extended not far enough to drown the heart of man, his passions and instincts. The unspeakable name of God is not touched by it; the sublime things of Christ are not affected by it. What has this story to do with you? It teaches that after the Deluge we start again with one lip, one language, one vocal sound.

So we look back to those wondrous times, and read the story of the Sinai thunders, the lightnings, the burning mountain, the spoken Law, the tables of stone with the summary of duty written upon them; and the rushing mighty wind, the cloven tongues, and the fire of Pentecost. All these things were in the soul of the people themselves. They who read ancient history rightly, know this—if there had been no sin, there had been no quaking mountain; when the soul quakes, nature quakes; nature trembles not, except we be faint; to the quiet soul, there be no trembling mountains, no riven heavens.

There are some learned Divines who try to get rid of as many miracles as they can, but not all. But if we get rid of one, why not of many? The story of the Pentecost, as written there, is as much

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a miracle as that of Babel. It is the unnatural colouring of a natural process: *that* is done at a stroke, which it takes centuries to do; and a knowledge of tongues is gained in a moment, which it takes years to learn. Some think that they merely uttered noises and cries without much sense in them. The Apostle Paul speaks strongly against there being used in the church tongues which nobody could understand, and in this he vindicates humanity against miracle, glorifies common sense, and puts a heavy, cold hand upon everything opposed to it. Said he, "I can speak with tongues more than ye all; but I had rather speak *five words* with my *understanding*." That was getting ready for to-day! Whenever a man has anything to say that is worth saying, he must say it out of his understanding, and so as to be understood by others. If a miracle is impossible to you—my advice to you is to reject it. But some are very anxious, when they find a myth, to make it appear very much *like* a miracle, yet not quite. So they say that when the Lord turned the water into wine, he did but do in a moment what is being done in every grape growing; for the grape starts in water, but the hot sun raises it into wine.

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That some strange phenomenon happened at Pentecost—of that I am clear; but how men came to speak a language which a moment before they did not know, I cannot imagine. It *may* have happened; but I don't know. So, if any of you are anxious to know *what I think;* I say, "I don't know much about it, and I can't tell how it could have happened." If you ask if there is any phenomenon *now* corresponding to that—there is that whole region of human nature, so little explored, in which live magicians, spirits, and witches of Endor; rhapsody, ecstasy, divine madness, and ancient oracles. They speak a language they know not. There are strange things recorded on this matter. Then there are mysteries of speech that some of you are cognizant of. There are some men who never can manage to get many sentences put together in a decent way; but to other men, speech is a plaything; a pipe with many stops, each one of which they can play; a stringed instrument, from which they can produce sounds of gladness and mirth, or tones of tragic sadness. *Why* it is that one man from his childhood should never be at a loss for a word, but his language be so flowing and plastic that he makes what he will of it; and that another man, pains-

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taking and learned, when he attempts to speak should always seem to find a chill in the air, and frost about, and his words dropping like bits of ice, I cannot tell—nor where to seek the hidden mystery. Some say it is in the brain; but it is a mystery.

And there be mysteries covered by these strange old records; and here, as in all things, I know in part, and see in part. There are many things that I cannot fathom, so I quietly lay them aside; and take them up again at leisure, and speculate upon them. But, if any man would take them down from that small cabinet in which I keep my objects of *faith*—he has gone to the wrong cabinet; for he won't find them there. So about this whole subject of miracles—though somewhat perplexed, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." I am content *not* to understand some of these things—*quite* content; I should like to understand, but I am content not to. I am set, in my humble way, as a watchman; until my tongue shall be speechless in the sweet silence of death. My faith in God, in life, in Christ, and in the Spirit that comes to him who seeks it, cannot be shaken by these things. Leave me my faith; it belongs not to these things, but can support itself

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by its own proved power to answer the wants of the human soul.

So my fixed soul beholds the stars of God, untroubled in their brightness by the varying systems constructed about them by Ptolemy, Copernicus, and other astronomers. And these Babylonian stones are brought home with embracements, and testimonials are given to the discoverers of these ancient relics. Oh, child, child! these little systems have their day. All systems, even in science—what be they? They are but the firmament over man—they are but the firmament made by man himself. No eye hath yet pierced the true firmament of God; no eye hath seen Him at any time. These little systems of theology—the science of cosmogony—and all these little collections of creeds—what are they but the little firmament of man? It is a theatre made by man's hands, which must be repaired by hands, and by-and-by removed by hands. Just as all these things pass away, so surely will pass away all forms and creeds that man himself has made, till there remain only those things which can be rooted in the nature of man and slowly developed in the march of human progress—righteousness, truth, pity, purity, judgment.

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Therefore, my soul is greatly at ease now. I look at these men, with their magic-lanterns and lights, and hear them tell me, "This is the Tower of Babel, that was never finished; for the men were dispersed, and their language confounded;" but I am not troubled when the show is past. No, no; learn, learn this—when it is wise that a child should pause before it kisses its mother, until a copy of its baptismal certificate is produced; when I cannot be hospitable to a man, until I know his pedigree; when I cannot take a stranger into my house, until I know who his fathers were; when righteousness depends upon legitimacy, and charity upon chronology; when food cannot be sweet in my mouth, if I know not whence it came—then you may be certain there is something wrong. These things are linked in life in these strange, arbitrary ways; but charity is eternal. Do you think I am going to faint to-day, because I do not understand Nebuchadnezzar? No; obliterate these records, and leave me to root my ethics in my nature; if need be, erase the whole, and my faith remains still; for it is not based upon these things.

Therefore, it becomes our duty to watch the troubled spirits who, because doubt has been cast

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upon Nebuchadnezzar, ask, "What is to become of faith?" My humble task is to go round as showman—to point out the Tower of Babel, its brick and slime; the scraps of chronology, floating drift-wood, "wood, hay, stubble," and the precious stones of God—the wood to be burned, the hay to rot, the stubble to be scorned; but the things of God to remain imperishable. "My son, hear the conclusion of the whole matter—Fear God, and keep His commandments." When the wood, the hay, and the stubble shall have passed away, there will be more chance for the earnest soul to see the eternal depths of the goodness, and righteousness, and mercy of God.

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CHRISTIANITY A NECESSARY DEVELOPMENT:

(LAW IN ALL THINGS).

Morning, June 18th, 1876.

"The gospel of God (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)."—ROMANS i. 1, 2.

WE will let these words rest for awhile, because by-and-by we shall come to the principle which is unfolded in them. Now, as you well know, it takes a man a long time to get rid of the phrases of old beliefs, after the beliefs themselves are done with. This partly arises from carelessness in speech, and partly from the careless way in which people investigate subjects.

For instance, take your coroner's verdicts: "Died by the visitation of God." This is but a remnant of old times. To us (some of us, at least), it is

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Paganism, and a survival of the *un*fittest. Once it was pious, but now it has become a mere phrase. If you are to die, you shut your eyes, as a wise man should, because the darkness is come, and it is time to sleep—if God visits you in your dying hour in quiet, ordinary fashion, and by His spirit sings to you the lullaby of eternity, that your weary eyes may find their coveted repose. That calls for no notice; but if it chance that by some strange touch of fever, or pestilence, you are called to die a death, sudden (yet not to be feared, though not to be desired), oh, then, that is "The visitation of God." As though the dear God were more likely to visit you in storm and pestilence than in the quiet twelfth hour! Once it went by chance and speciality, and it was thought that God rushed in upon occasions, and showed Himself to man.

A remnant of these old things may be seen, when, in the case of accident, one man gets killed, and another "escapes by the merciful interposition of providence." What absolute nonsense! If there is such a thing as the interposition of God, it is as likely to be shown to one man as to another. But does it not arise out of the large egotism of humanity to suppose that God should specially intervene in our behalf? And is it not the Theism

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of true wisdom to be able to trust in the all-pervading love of that Father, who suffers not one sparrow to fall to the ground without His notice? Had He then forgotten that child of His that met his death by accident? Not He.

When men get wise in God, they will understand that every creature is in that exact place, and in those exact circumstances, which for its eternal welfare it is necessary that it should be in. But it will take you a day or two to understand that To see that clearly and to feel it passionately—that is Theism, that is a belief in God.

So that phrase about the "Visitation of God" still lingers. I have no anger with those who once held it; but to us it has ceased to be expressive. The revelation of the Almighty (made to-day, you know), teaches me this—that there is nothing in this world that is fortuitous, that "chance" is but a relative expression, with regard to man's foreknowledge and man's ignorance; that the most exceptional thing that happens is as much and as necessarily under the government of law as the most usual thing. Until you see that, you are a baby, a dunce, a mere child in God. That which only happens once in a thousand years is as dependable as that which happens every day; for the

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law by which it cannot be anything but what it is applies to occasional things as much as it does to everyday things. The one is not more unchanging and rigid than the other. All things in this world are ruled by law, from the littlest to the greatest.

> "The very law that moulds a tear
> And sends it trickling from its source,
> That law maintains the earth a sphere
> And guides the planets in their course."

The rule of tides in creeks is the rule of tides on ocean shores. But as long as I hear you talk the jargon of the Chinese, so long I shall put you down as babes, unable to understand the great Reformation that is about to come.

Turn to the astronomer, and let him teach you for awhile. He will tell you that the shower of meteoric stones is as punctual as the precession of the equinoxes,* and science will tell you that wind and storm are as regular and necessary and fixed as the tides that twice a day wash our shores. The astronomer will tell you that the flaming aurora is as fixed in its laws and as punctual in its movements as the going of the planets themselves.

* A slow motion of the equinoctial points, contrary to the order of the zodiacal signs. It takes 25,868 years to complete the cycle.

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You all know that the eclipse keeps its time, and that even those comets which, like apparitions, come wandering occasionally into this sphere—which have raised the hair upon the heads of some people, and sent a thrill of horror into their hearts—even they are as orderly as you are, and much more punctual than some of you. I would rather depend upon the far-off comet for punctuality, than on some of you in coming to the worship of God. "But it comes so seldom," you say. No, no, *you* are here such a short time; that is it! I shall not be here to see the next comet, perhaps; but it will keep its time.

Once these visitants were looked upon as miraculous and marvellous. Kings were shaken and Popes were in doubt about them; but now all is order. But if we have lost in one way, we have gained in another. It is a very sad thing to some people to think that everything is now law, and that nothing is providential; but the rapture of the student nowadays is in the unbroken majesty of law, never deviating, never broken. And this is the method of God; for order and unbroken method is His glory.

Of all studies, one of the most fascinating, is what our fathers looked upon as the "accidental"

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things of life. Now, if anything happens to my watch, I take it to him who knows what belongs to it. *I* know nothing about it; I never amused myself by trying to mend a watch yet, for I have not time; so I go to one of the supreme watch-makers, and allow him to be Pope to me in that matter. A man's occupation absolves him from understanding these things. But with regard to all the great things of life, a child should be able to understand everything he sees and hears. He should pick up a stone and know its genesis—its apostolic succession, so to speak—and be able to assert its history. This is what I call education. For education consists generally in understanding that nothing is fortuitous; that there are rules for the most eccentric things, and that the most occasional things are not occasional in the eyes of common sense, but have their ways and laws.

If you have seen that, in science, apply it to human things. For instance, there has been no madness in this world that was not subject to law. Every case of madness as much arose out of the causes that went before it as the most humdrum and regular thing in existence. Some of us remember the battle of Waterloo, on the 18th of June. Now that battle of Waterloo must look very

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enigmatical to some people—a thing not to be accounted for. To the wise man, however, it has its place in history as definitely as other things, and has now the same laws and rules.

So also with human conduct—there is no such thing as chance. All you are, at this day, is the result of what went before. Everything about you is necessarily what it is, inasmuch as it is the product of causes which were before you, and which made you what you are. Now, do not trouble yourselves about the freedom of your will. I will bring it back to you if it should go, and restore that priceless possession at the proper time. It is amazing how one side of human life will look to the other sometimes. What a collection you are now! There is your body, for instance. I could tell you how much earthy rubbish you are made up of, and what your bones and blood are made of. "But," you say, "I have an immortal soul that won't die." Wait a little while. I claim that for every human action, and for every human actor, there is as necessarily order and law as for all other things. "But I have a free will," you will say. Wait a little while; we shall come to that by-and-by.

What we want is that habit of mind which from the law that governs natural things constructs a

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principle which may be applied to all other things. We are, therefore, as bound to bring the battle of Waterloo under law, as we are to believe that the slowly recurring comet is under law. "But, in dealing with comets we are dealing with matter; and in dealing with man we are dealing with mind." Thank you; I was aware of it. And wherefore, in dealing with mind, or soul, or whatever you call your conscious faculties, are you to be lawless? Wherefore are you to consider them less amenable to law than other things? The general idea is, that when we get into the region of mind we have done with law. But it is not so. You and I are not over great; but the world could not spare us, because we all do our little share towards carrying on its history. So the wildest extravagancies of humanity—that horrible Bonaparte, and that fearful battle of Waterloo—all these things are as much amenable to law and order, and are as much the results of essential causes which could not be varied, as we have learned to know is the case with the planets, which have rules and laws ascertainable and ascertained.

Now take that problem that there must have been some necessary law which led to the battle of Waterloo. (For the wildest thing is as much

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to be traced to the workings of law as to providence and fate.) Take that one thing. Perhaps it looks to you just about as wilful as any thing could be. Or take language. Ignorant people look upon the variety of human language as a miraculous thing, and refer you to the story of the Tower of Babel. It is a grand old legend, but it is not a scientific explanation of the origin of languages. I have no objection to the Tower of Babel, but none of my hopes are built upon its walls. But if we look upon the matter in the light of common sense—that in some way human speech got confounded, but that the way in which it happened cannot be ascertained ; then language becomes one of the most charming studies. We say of one language, "it belongs to this group," and of another, "it belongs to that group." Language is not erratic. The new science of Comparative Philology will show you that the growth of language has been governed by law. The history of man is the history of things. Languages, like men, have their migrations, and we know what way they went by the words they have left behind them. Language is either present life or the shells of dead life. Many languages tell of old faiths, old creeds, and old mythologies. Words which are no longer in

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use, to the wise are *ever* in use. As the geologist takes up a fossil and traces its history, so the student of language takes up a dead word, and in that word sees the life and passion and soul that once was there. It is necessary, though, sometimes, like the bird, to make a wide sweep to reach the spot you want.

Now, can any of these principles be applied to religion? Are our religions erratic, "providential interposition" work, a "visitation of God"? or are men's religions in the same domain of law and as necessarily the result of what cannot be altered or checked as other things? In our day most men have agreed to maintain that there is some law of religious development. For instance, in the days of our fathers Christianity was a new thing. Jesus Christ brought to light entirely new truths. Nevertheless, he said, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil." And Paul describes himself as a "servant of Jesus Christ, separated unto the gospel of God which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures." Thus we have the Old Testament, and not new government. Moses and the prophets are made to join languages with Christ. And Paul also has to be as Christ, as the "Son of David." In all these phrases we

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recognise the clear unmistakable conviction of this mighty man that every religion is a development, and that they evolve themselves by laws as strict as those of politics or even of the heavenly bodies themselves. Therefore, I say, there is development in religion as in everything else. If you think you have got hold of a religion that never can be changed, I tell you it is all a dream.

Now, between *revelation* and law, is there that necessary antagonism that is usually assumed? Does what we call revelation exclude law? Does the one so fill the ground that there is no room for the other? Has law been the product of successive revelations? Or is revelation itself only a form of order and law? I deny any antagonism, and I say that the one does not preclude the other. Why should the theologian have any objection to this word, law? Simply because he is under the impression that it is hostile to the immediate action of the Spirit of God. That is why, until these men get wise, they will always shrink from the unbroken law—because they think it puts God under a restraint, and prevents the working of miracles, and rather chills the world by removing God further off from man. And why does the man of science get angry when we speak of "revealed religion"?

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Because he thinks it is opposed to the constant order which he loves to find in all things.

Are not these things the product of partial ignorance? Is there any sense in this talk of the antagonism between revelation and law? What is there to boggle at in revelation? and what is there to find fault with in law, if wisely understood? But it is the general opinion that theology and science cannot possibly get on together. Now I hold that "both are right and both are wrong." I believe in no revelation that is inconsistent with law, and I believe in no law that is not a part of revelation. So a statement of one involves the other. But for my part, I very much prefer to listen to a Doctor of Science than to a Doctor of Divinity. If a Doctor of Science were going to discourse, and a Doctor of Divinity, I should go to hear the science man myself, for I have tried divinity, and I know what it means—unsaleable stock, brought out of the warehouse of an exploded past. But I know what science will teach me—the *last* things of God and man, and the law that explains their being.

But as religion is as great a fact as the things that science reveals, it is worth while to see whether or not this warfare is really needful?—whether there is not a law of development just as reliable

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with regard to theology as with regard to politics or science? The question, then, is: Is Christianity a necessary and divine development, or is Christianity an after-thought? You would think it was "An Act to amend an Act" to listen to a great deal of our theology. People never speak plainly because they cannot think plainly. Now, is Christianity an after-thought? Or is it a part of the necessary divine order of things? Is it the original design of God, promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures? Or is it an after-thought? Who shrinks from those words of Paul's, "Whom He did foreknow, them also He did predestinate"? Is there anything strange in that? No, all things are foreknown, ordered, predestinated by God. Inserted mistletoe-wise into the earthly branch, coming into the ken of man as the planet afar off, Christianity was there from the beginning. I do not regard it as a sublime after-thought. No, but that it necessarily grew out of Moses' laws and the prophets who went before it. The river of God goes on sublimely to infinities; therefore there must be new depths of religion until all men shall know *the* Lord, and His knowledge shall cover the earth.

"The world's end and beginning are the same,
For Jesus ended it when Adam came."

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Does that sound like a riddle? We won't explain it; but leave it for your afternoon's meditations.

Such, then, is the statement which we want you to think over for a Sunday or two. Remember, you do not come here to receive authoritative decisions, but only such guidance in matters of study and thought as a life devoted to study and thought justifies you in expecting, and obliges me to give. Thus, then, our Christian religion is not erratic, but is the necessary outcome of the revelation of God. For God's revelation is constant. The gospel of God which was promised afore by the old prophets, and which developes itself when the world is prepared to receive it, was there from the beginning, but is bodied forth in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Some of you rejoice to belong to that unbroken stream of holy souls who have ceased to belong to the lower creation, and increasingly feel after God, if haply they may find Him. Thus we are related not only to Paul and David and Moses, but to the dim worshippers of earlier time who sought to embody their worship in some fantastic form. We should, however, have ceased to worship idols made with hands, have ceased to reverence arks and covenants, and the bodies of men and women. By Jesus Christ the

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new gospel is preached. "The day cometh, and now is, when men shall worship God in spirit and in truth." Thus, the idol gone, Apollo gone, the worship of the false god gone, all localisms over, God the Spirit only shall be truly worshipped in spirit and in truth.

If to be included in so big a family is offensive to you, you can withdraw, and be one of the "elect," and sing if you like that unloveliest anthem that any man can sing in this world, "Lord, are there *few* that shall be saved?" I can only hope for you that you will be greatly disappointed in eternity. The most poetic and the sweetest souls have sung a different song. One rapt singer says he heard the heavenly song, and its volume was so great, its sound so overwhelming, that he could compare it to nothing less than the great sea. "I saw a great multitude," he says, "like the sand upon the sea shore, and I heard their voice as the voice of the great sea." Such was the vision of the sweetest soul that ever lived, the one whom Jesus Christ won to himself, and who was called "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Such was the vision of one who lay upon the bosom of Christ, and whose ear was quickened, because it was attuned to the heart-beat of the Son of God.

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THE ARK OF THE COVENANT DISCARDED: THE THREE STAGES OF RELIGION.

Morning, June 25th, 1876.

"And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more."—JEREMIAH iii. 16.

PLEASANT to the wise, and profitable to the student would it be to follow the history of the Ark of the Covenant of God, from the days when it was first known to the Jewish people, and from the period when it became known to other nations. For Arks of Covenants are not confined to the Hebrews; the Egyptians knew them, too; and Captain Cook, if you remember, in that far Pacific island, found

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an ark with rings and means of carrying it. And these quaint people called it "the House of the Lord." This ark, or chest, was probably kept as some reminder of the Flood—a little miniature ark in representation of that in which Noah is said to have had his escape.

Before there were any tabernacles or temples, the Ark was carried before the Jewish people. Its history is a strange one. Into it were put the tables of the Covenant. According to an old legend, when the Jews wanted to cross the Jordan the river parted for them before the Ark of the Covenant. It is said, too, that the Jericho walls fell before the Ark. Too sadly pathetic are the records I have read to you, and too sadly forgotten. Those Jews were anything but spiritually minded with regard to the Ark of the Covenant of God. They believed it had miraculous powers. When they took it into camp, the Philistines got hold of it, and afterwards the Israelites got hold of it again. And then you read (and may believe it if you like) of how a man put forth his hand to steady it, and the Lord killed that man for doing so. The poor man did his duty, tried to save the ark, and was killed in consequence. In the days of Solomon it is put into the Temple, and one does not hear

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much more about it. It got to be a mere curiosity, and was preserved along with the brazen serpent and other relics. But, when Solomon's temple was destroyed, I suppose the ark was destroyed too; for after the Jewish Captivity we hear no more about it. They had no further use for it, so it was forgotten. And then comes Jeremiah, that great prophet (for he was not a priest, but a prophet), and he, looking forward to some great day in the Jewish history or the world's story, puts an end to it altogether, and speaks of the time when they shall leave off even speaking of it, when it shall not even come to mind or be remembered. *There's* an exodus for the Ark of the Covenant of God!

Now, in following that ark, what shall we be led to? Not only to many strange things in history, but into some great facts with regard to religious development. You remember I was speaking to you on Sunday last about this, and I was laying down the law that development in religion amongst mankind was no more arbitrary than development in anything else, but that it follows conditions, and that these conditions are inevitable. This does not call for tears and lamentations. A large portion of what you believe is really not worth believing. It is a mere Ark of the Covenant. And think what

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that was to the Jews—victory, safety, the local dwelling-place of God, where the Almighty appeared and where God was to be heard of, inquired of, and known! Yet it went out, and Jeremiah bids it farewell, and declares, "We do not want any more of that business." How the people must have wept over that! And now we hear of ministers talking nonsense in our pulpits about "infidelity coming in like a flood, and there being no ark to stay it." The Israelites rose above Arks of Covenants; they transcended all this poor fetich business, and ceased to worship places. Down in Asia Minor you may see what the Greek did for the Jew, and what the Greek and the Jew combined have made of Christianity (much to its damage in many respects); but all that old worship of the Jews is gone, and we hear no more about God dwelling in an ark. The spiritual man says of God—"It is He that sitteth above the circle of the earth." To him, God has no particular affection for Mount Zion, but His spirit fills the whole earth.

All nations have thought that God has a particular affection for particular places. The British nation thinks God has a peculiar affection for the British arms and ensign. The Russian does the same with regard to his country, and the French-

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man the same. Now, how God could have a peculiar affection for all at one time may be matter of speculation; but it is generally considered that in these things one need not be rational or amenable in any degree to sense. But all that will by-and-by be outgrown, and the day will come when nothing will remain but for Paul, under the teaching of Jesus Christ, to preach the nearness and the dearness of the *Gentile* to God as well as the Jew. So, although it is told of God speaking to Moses face to face as a friend; of His dwelling in arks and particular places; it all goes, when we hear in that clear collected voice—"Lo! the Lord of all sitteth above the circle of the earth, reviewing all men, caring for all, and the younger sons are brought in."

In tracing the history of the Ark of the Covenant, we begin with the Old Testament, when God was thought to dwell in particular places. At last we come to the New Testament, and wander by that well-side, and listen to that wondrous sermon which Jesus Christ preached to that woman there—"The time cometh, and now is, when men shall no longer worship God in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem; for God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." There-

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fore, nowadays God is to be worshipped in mind, in truth, in act, in deed, in reality, instead of as in the days of old—in ceremony and ritual.

But ages of growth are involved in that history of the ark, from the days when it brought victory to the Jews, to the days when Jeremiah said, "It is all done with." There is the childhood of religion, the lustre of its youth, and also its maturity to some extent. But there is a time, scarce yet arrived, when the spirit, rising above all these things, shall determine the form of religion. In the days of the childhood of men's religions they are worshippers of *things;* in their youth they worship persons; in the last great days they will worship God the Spirit in spirit and in truth. That is the true condition of the soul. But all these stages did not exactly follow one another successively in the history of the world; for in the Old Testament we find them all existing at the same time.

Even now there are people who do like to see some place where God resides more than in any other place. Priests and silly women are delighted to have a cross or a box to bow before and worship—which is about as respectable as the old Ark of the Covenant, and not more so. People who bow and cross themselves before a box are no more en-

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lightened than those dear old Pagans. In vain the proclamation—"We will have no more to do with Arks of Covenants, boxes and chests;" they will have them. And many of you would like to think that God dwells in a particular spot; and so you turn into an Oratory, where you can have some velvet, and a Prayer-book with a cross upon it, and there you go and kneel, and read, and waste your time, and "cry aloud" to the Almighty and violate the most sacred aspirations of the soul. Do you think you will be heard for your much praying? You ought to have something better to do than to be eternally praying. "Do not as the heathen do," says Christ, "who use vain repetitions, and think that they shall be heard for their much praying." But there always have been these fetich people, and I suppose there always will be to the end of the chapter. But there will be a few, like Jeremiah, worshipping God in spirit and in truth, finding his temple in the blue heavens and in the humble hut, knowing no place nearer than another, but finding Him in their own hearts, and hearing Him in the storm.

These three great principles neither overlap one another nor succeed one another, but may be found running together as they were in Egypt. The first

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stage is the worship of creatures—sometimes of a beast or some living object, and sometimes of idols; the second stage is the worship of persons, as in the Brahmanic religion, or the worship of men full of light and learning as Juggernaut or Odin. That is one of the most respectable of all religions. Then comes the third stage, the one of which Jeremiah speaks, when all those visible things shall be done with and God shall be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Thus then, if you will follow this ark from place to place, you may learn a great lesson from that Old Testament history, and see how, from the poor low fetichism of the Jew grew up at last that sublime monotheism of Jeremiah,—a belief in one God. Thus, from the time when men believed that this Ark of the Covenant carried safety with it, divided rivers, overcame the Philistines, put to death the man who touched it—gradually we trace the history, until at last we read that "The sacrifices of God are a broken heart and a contrite spirit." So, there shall be no more knife, nor altar, nor Arks of Covenants; no more stone tables nor mystery-mongerings; for now we know that there is but one God, who sitteth sublime "above the circle of the earth," one great Lover of the world who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

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Now, let us watch for a moment how this Christian Religion is amenable to precisely the same principles. If we listen to Jesus Christ, it is the purest spiritual religion that ever was. It is bound by no place, time, ritual, or ceremony. Christ, as a Jew, went through some of the old-world things, and you know when young he was taken to be circumcised; but when he grew up and became a teacher, he said, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." He came to teach a religion that has no special place or time, but that knows all places, times, and circumstances. He did all that religion consists in. It consists not in praying and Sabbath keeping and dismalness; in ceremonies and postures, but in doing the will of God. And the way to serve God, he said, was to serve man; the way to show your love to God was to love man. All the rest was but a spiritual valentine, or what not. "If ye love not men, whom ye have seen, how shall ye love God whom ye have not seen?" There is but one way in which ye can show that ye are my disciples. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me."

Now, as we have had occasion to show you, the

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most spiritual religion, among unspiritual people, will become unspiritual. If the pitcher be of earth and hath defilements, the water that is put into it must suffer. Christ had but a very short life. The Jews got hold of him; they looked at the blessed babe of God and wanted to circumcise it. The Greeks got hold of him, and wanted to put him to college to learn wisdom. Hear him speaking to that quibbling mob; they are as dark as ever. He may talk all day long, and they will not be wiser than when he started. And men still worship a God unknowable and unknown. Thus the Christian religion sinks from being the sweet, simple, spiritual religion of Christ, and becomes childish again, and goes back to the middle ages when it was thought that God dwelt in boxes, and God and Christ were much nearer to man than they are now. The bride of Christ is no longer clothed in heavenly white, having all whiteness and pureness within her; but has become the bride of this world, flattered by kings and blessed by popes. The whole thing is close and stuffy, smelling of incense, childish to the last degree. Who recognises the religion of Jesus Christ in all this? They worship places, and keep Saints' Days, and have heaps of relics—old stones, and bones, and rags and rubbish. Is *that* the

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Christian religion? Yes, the Christian religion has gone back to those childish days of the worship of things, rather than of persons or places.

And then you remember how at last mankind rose; and how, in the good course of God's providence, Protestantism swept out many of these relics, these rookeries and nunneries, monks and priests. We are making a clean sweep of them all in this country, thank God. Pilgrimages have died out, and miracles have died out, the Saints have gone, and the Ark of the Covenant has gone, and there comes forth a revival. Still men do not get into that spiritual religion of Jesus Christ. Protestantism has set up some idols, but they are idols of the mind, and that is better than the old ones, and now we are getting rid of them, too. The worship of the Virgin Mary and of the Saints has pretty nearly died out, and we are passing on to the pure worship of God the Father.

But we shall have to drop a great deal of what passes for religion in this country—Sabbath keeping as a sign of grace; "divine service" as the most acceptable form of worship (in which man and God are the least served). Much of that must pass away, and the cause of God will by-and-by be known to be this—the cause of man, to free him

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from cholera, from filth and dirt, from crookedness and ugliness and hideousness. The cause of God will be this—to clean the streets, and clean the people in them, and to bring light into all kinds of places and ways. The cause of God will be to get the sword sheathed, and the sceptre broken. The cause of God shall clearly be known when all men live together in peace; when the vanity of human rank is over, and when all the priests, and popes, and kings, and the whole collection of them, have become like the Ark of the Covenant, when they shall not even come to mind, or be remembered any more. When the spiritual religion of Jesus Christ comes to be held by the multitude of mankind, there will be no more priests and tiaras, and no more sceptres, but men will dwell in simple righteousness. It may be a far-off problem yet, but it is inevitable in the history of mankind, when to serve God shall be to serve man, when the *divinest* service of God shall be the service of man. Then men shall no longer worship places, Arks of Covenants, boxes, and chests.

You had better clear yourselves of that most wretched of all hindrances—your "views;" for until you understand that God has not hinged your safety upon your belief in some lifeless "doctrine,"

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there can be very little spiritual progress. Crooked views of God and of the Trinity, crooked views about the Athanasian Creed, are not things by which a man's destiny is determined hereafter. Man never had a worse thing to worship than a creed. When some poor peasant goes to church to be comforted, built up, and strengthened, and hears that succulent morsel of divinity rolled out about the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, do you think he can get any comfort from that? In some places they *sing* it, which is still more charming. I know nothing more absurd than *singing* the Athanasian Creed—"There be three persons in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible; yet there be not three, but one incomprehensible." What a blast of the trumpet! What a roll of the drum! And then the unction which accompanies the words, "*Which except a man do truly believe, he cannot be saved!*" This is pure fetichism. Nevertheless, we find men continually going a whoring from the true God, and seeking after these foolish inventions.

As already hinted, we find that the childish, the mediæval, and the more mature stage of religion

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frequently overlapped one another, all existing at the same time. Therefore it is that we find Ritualism still existing, even in this nineteenth century. We find numbers of men and women who wish to be childish again, and they certainly succeed. The whole business is no better than Paganism. There are crossings and bowings, and dronings, and intonings, and altogether it is like the childhood of religion coming back again.

As to the Roman Church, well, the Roman Church is the great sanctuary of all, you know! It has its childish stage, and its second stage; and though there have been men in that Church who have seen God, and worshipped Him in spirit, and served Him in pureness of heart, yet, in the main, the Roman Church is but a great museum, wherein the early stages of religion may be found. You go into a Roman Church, and you see candles burning; and little images of the Virgin Mary, and the little Christ, and St. John, made in wax. I always go into these churches, because to me they are museums. I watch the image of the Virgin, and I think of those early days when men prayed to images for success in certain undertakings; and then, after waiting two or three weeks, and finding themselves still unsuccessful, they would give the

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image a hiding; but, if successful, they would give it a new petticoat. So one goes back to the morning of the world, and to the gods "made with hands." And one sees no difference, except that the poor images of nowadays seem to have lost what little spiritual life they once had, and to have set up for themselves. All these things, then, may be seen in this world, and in this country too.

Then we wander into that last of all men's doings —the Friends' Meeting-house. There we once could see the nearest approach which the world had yet arrived at to a spiritual religion. There is much silence (which is a great blessing sometimes). They have no priest or parson, and there is no distinction of sex among them, for all are of one spirit. If a woman has anything to say, she says it; if she has nothing to say, she says nothing. But the palmy days of Quakerism are past, and even from that sect the glory has departed. If you read of the early days of the sect, you will find they held that it was not the spirit of man that was to be judged by the Bible, but the Bible that was to be judged by the spirit of man. But now, they would think it a fine thing if the spirit should move one of them to say "the 'light that lighteth every man' shall judge of the Book; for we are all 'taught of God,' lighted

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by the light that cometh from God." In the past they have protested against the letter of the Scripture ever overruling the judgment of man. And what has been the consequence? Those men have had light wheresoever they went, and the cause of truth and manhood and peace has been better served by them than by any other sect. But now they have fallen into a slough. They have got some little tenets to quibble over, and have ceased to be a peculiar people (I do not mean as to dress); and have ceased to hold the one sublime doctrine, of the Book speaking to the spirit of man, and to be judged thereby; of the light of God in the soul of man, leading him to do those things which his conscience, so illumined, bids him do. They have no idols, I admit; but, if you were now to take a short tour through Europe, you could find among them some silly belief in the miraculous. You can see Bethesda, without going back to Jerusalem.

All these things, then, show the three stages of religious life; and if you will follow the history of that Ark of the Covenant, you will be prepared to form an estimate of those religions, and will perhaps be able to indulge in Jeremiah's vision—that the day shall come when men shall say no more, The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, neither

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shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they want it any more ; but it shall be utterly done with, for each man shall walk in lowly faithfulness according to the light which he has received, that light being received from all sources through which light can come.

The next great book that will be written by some intuitive mind will be to teach the world what things it is impossible to know, and therefore what it is desirable to cease to talk about. For, should God give you another Lord Bacon, Aristotle, or other great reformer, his probable duty would be this—to teach mankind what things they cannot know, and what they can know, that they may leave off talking about what they cannot know, and turn with a fine attention to what they can know. And when that day comes, what creeds will be wanted? Oh! what arks of covenants will be carried away! What heaps of so-called piety, what Alps of sermons, what mountain loads of catechisms will be taken away, in order that the clear light of day may take their place! If I desired a long life it would be to witness this—when, some high day, the spirit of charity should pervade the nation, and the people should arise and go forth with a new cart, and a large one, loaded with the corpses of the

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dead books of the unknowable, and take them all away to the museum, there to abide for the study of the idle and the curious, but to cease to pester and plague mankind. Ofttimes in vision, I see all these books go, in order that there may be room for this one book of two pages, each page containing one sentence—on the one is written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength," and on the other, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." To this stage we trust you and I are travelling, and we put these things to you in order that you may not distress yourself about any arks of covenants you once had. You shall forget all about them, their ground-plans and patterns; you shall not even remember them, for you shall not want them.

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STAGES OF SOCIAL CONDITION AND GOVERNMENT.

Morning, July 9th, 1876.

"Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."—1 SAMUEL viii. 4, 5.

YOU will remember that we have been endeavouring to show you that nothing in this world, nothing in man's conduct, nothing in nature, is arbitrary; that everything has its place, and that Religions as well as all other things have their orderly origin and growth, and, some of us think, their inevitable result. We have shown you that different stages of man's religion are sometimes overlapping and sometimes contending with one another. *Now* we find men worshipping a material object; then we find them

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worshipping persons; afterwards we find them freeing their religion from all arks of covenants, sacrifices, and the like, in order that God the Spirit may be worshipped in spirit and in truth. We bade you follow the history of that Ark of Covenant, and find in it the history of man's conceptions of God. In that sacred depository were laid up the broken covenants or tablets of stone. There was much that was noble about that ark, but much had gathered around it that was childish. It is well for awhile, perhaps, to preserve the brazen serpent as a relic, but it is certain to come by-and-by to be worshipped by fools as divine. The day shall come, however, when some seer or prophet shall take hold of it with a noble contempt, and dash it in pieces, and say, "There, go, thou bit of brass!"

So we have followed the ark, until the ark went out, being dropt clean out of mind. In that passage in Jeremiah, he pictures the days when it shall no more be thought that God has a particular affection for Mount Zion, or a parochial feeling for Judæa, and he tells them that in those days they shall say no more "the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall

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that be done any more." And in prophesying of the fate of that Ark of the Covenant, he did but foretell what should become of all arks of covenants when the day shall arrive that God the Spirit shall be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

But now there is another part of the matter to point out to you, and that is, the inevitable changes that have come over the social condition and government of mankind since the days of the early stages of religion. You know there was the stage of absolute faith in the priesthood, when whatsoever the priest told man was divine was received and worshipped. There was the stage when the priest was looked upon as a supreme person; when he undertook everything for mankind, when he offered sacrifices for them, and put up prayers for rain. This mumble-jumble takes a long time to die out; and though *the tail* has dropped now, there is still some small indication that once one was there. But, by-and-by, there comes an increase of human thought, or an increase of scepticism, and we hear of military movements among the priests; for though priests may be good for saying blessings before battle, yet the life of the priest is apt to get unsacerdotal—when the people, either from enlightenment or insubordination, are no longer given

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to their control. Then up comes the supremest order of priests, a military order, who seek to dominate over everything. But, by-and-by, in that land of Judea, man's life gets wider than the priest can manage. Priestly government is no longer adequate, for an increase of secular feeling and reason had begun to be asserted by the Israelites. To be ruled by priests, a man must have faith, and naught else; but, when once the rationalistic spirit begins to assert itself, the exclusive government of the priests is impossible.

Now, let us speak of the records of Samuel. Those of you who read your Bible as a human record of human passions and feelings, can easily find the bias of different writers. Just as I would not consult some of the clergy with regard to the life of Henry VIII., neither would I consult Samuel with regard to King Saul, and the action of the Israelites in changing their priestly government for a monarchy. No priest ever does like the uprise of a State. If you doubt this, you have only to watch what is going on in Europe now. If you were to ask the Pope to write a Book of Chronicles, how frequently he would put in those words, "Thus saith the Lord!" It would be edifying, no doubt, if our friend Pius the IX. would write us an account

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of the Emperor of Germany. What a character he would give him! Therefore you must make allowances for the bias of the writer, and in reading this history under the broad light of general principles, consider whether a necessary increase of secular power on the part of the people did not inevitably bring about the time when an arrangement must be come to with these priests.

But it takes a long time before people can be brought to read Hebrew history as they would read Roman history; and they shudder with horror when it is proposed to apply the same principles to the old Judean kings as they apply to those of the present day. Now that Saul is made king, it does not necessarily follow that the priest will be altogether put down. Sometimes king and priest run parallel. Sometime ago there was a supreme priest and a supreme king running parallel with one another in Japan; the one saw to the State department, and the other to the Church department. But that is exceptional. Two horses may run so closely that both may be winners of the prize; but in the struggles of men, there cannot be two victors. If two men ride on horseback, one must ride behind.

Now, we see an exclusively priestly government;

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and then the two governments running side by side. Then there is a stage when the priest claims to be not only the representative of God, but the incarnation of God. Thus the Brahman priest says that he is lord of all things, because it is given to a Brahman to become part of the divine. So the Pope is worshipped, not for any wit or beauty, but because he is part of the Divinity; and poor men and women may be seen crawling to Rome to kiss his foot! Then you have the Church and State arrangement, as it is in this country, where the head of the State is head also of the Church.

Just before our time, this strange necessity of subordinating the priesthood to secular power had its development in Russia. The greatest man of modern times was that strange man, Peter the Great. He was ship-carpenter, soldier, sailor, emperor, pontiff—all things. That man, seeing that the clergy were monstrously ignorant, determined to make himself Patriarch, and at last he did make himself head of the Church of Russia. This was no Samuel coming in to make a king, but a downright king coming in in spite of Samuel. With his sheer good sense and strong hand, he thought things would go better under his care, and so he put himself at the head. And I put down

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no bad motives to Peter, because, with all Peter's strange faults (and remember, mighty men like that are not to be looked at as common men are)—with all his faults, go to what land he would, he ne'er neglected the worship of God. He goes out of his way to see where Luther lived, prayed, struggled, and suffered. He possessed a strong sense of the nearness of the infinite God; a strange, strong assurance of the overhanging presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords. From no mean motives then, but from a knowledge of the inevitable necessity of what was wanted for Russia, did that bold demi-god put himself at the head of the whole affair.

There is one more stage, and that is the one carried out by our friends now celebrating the hundredth year of their national life. The Government of the United States knows nothing of religious matters; it cannot be troubled with them. It points you to the chaplain, and says, "Go to him." Thus, for the first time, we have a Government which makes no recognition of Christianity or of any Religion whatsoever. There is a party in America who want exceedingly to get a recognition by the Government of the Almighty—an acknowledgment that there is a God—but they cannot.

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Now we have the last stage. We have led you from the day when the priest was all things, to the time when the State is supreme, having no religion, or, at least, no preferences. If the State does anything at all with regard to religion, it is to point to the chaplain; because there are always a certain number of people who wish for the services of chaplains. We are not going to say which is best and right; for we cannot conceive of an Englishman dropping all these things while still in the old country. But, whenever an Englishman gets exported, there are certain things which always drop off him. When an Englishman gets away from his own country, his vital connection with the old roots seems to become weaker. You cannot grow these things in a new country. They have become noble from the gathered glory surrounding them. They have been cultivated upon heights so high, they cannot be made to grow if exported. An Englishman may endeavour to get up a *pedigree*, and be sentimental about that, but with regard to kings and priests and such things, you cannot export them—in a new country they must inevitably die.

Such, then, is the outline of what seems to be the march of religious opinion in its effect upon the

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State, its Government, and manners. Now one word of warning, though it is hardly necessary for most of you. Remember, the form of a Government must always depend upon the principles which lie beneath. To set up the divine right of Republicanism for all nations would be ridiculous. To withdraw the monarchy from some would be a curse instead of a blessing. But the road in which we march is ever forward, and can never be varied. You can no more prevent certain things happening than you can prevent an unevolved oak from growing into a great tree. That which belongs to the spiritual and the unseen will possibly by-and-by harmonize itself with that which is secular, material, and scientific; but at present there must be a struggle.

In Germany, the battle between the Church and the State is pretty lively just now. They agree, of course, that there is a department that should belong to the State, and a department that should belong to the Church; but then the question is, where is the boundary line to be drawn? At last we are told that it is impossible the State can settle this boundary; it must be done by the Church. If you once give an inch to these people, they will soon make it seem to be the province of

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Rome; in order to bring back the dominancy of the Church, and of its head, the Pope.

And that is the process that some of you believe to be going on successfully in this country. Well, if you really have reason to think the Pope is coming in, it is only another sign of the intense lowness of this country. But no. They may catch a marquis or two perhaps; they may get up a sort of Court List, with a few members of the Peerage upon it, and then stupid people cry out, "Romanism is making great way!" Neither peers nor paupers will frighten me. Never in this country do we go over to Rome! I have been here now thirty years, and I have never met with any Birmingham families who have gone over to Rome. I put it to you: How many indigenous Birmingham families have you known go over to Rome? Subtract the Irishmen, and where is their gain of power? Do you think this is an exceptional town, because you belong to it? Well, then, take Wolverhampton. Go there, and ask if they know any two indigenous families who have followed the marquis? The Christian religion depends but little upon the peerage. Its Lord owed his burial to Joseph of Arimathea, who was a rich man; but there were not many rulers or great people who believed on

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him, "not many wise, not many noble." Therefore, there is no fear. And, remember, we are too strong for the priests to come back again. Their craft is in danger. Let these people catch what silly women they can; let them catch what weak men they can, and what celebrities they can; there is no fear. The unbroken march towards spiritualism—the spiritualism of pure love, love of God and love to men—will still go on. Take courage, take courage.

There is a time for everything. It is a good deal for a generation to have put a Pope off a throne; it is a good thing to have seen a mighty nation grow up kingless and priestless before God. Therefore, let each nation take its own time, and it will work out its salvation in its own way. Of one thing my soul is confident—never back again is it possible for any intelligent nation to go. And let all races remember that with increased liberty there should be increased obedience to the law of God. That is the privilege of liberty. When men become truly educated, they will learn this—when they have chosen for themselves a king, sweetly must they be bound to follow! "Let My people go free, *that they may serve Me.*" Freedom should mean escape from the lower bondages, in order that

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men may come into the sweet service of the spiritual God.

And be you sure of this, those of you who sometimes think that the spirit of liberty is hostile to obedience—that is one of the green tricks of fools who "play fantastic tricks before high heaven." Life and its sweet burdens—wife, little children, daily bread, and taxes—all come to teach the great lesson, he is free who has most self-sacrifice; he is freest who renders most service to his fellow men.

We close these rough sketches, then, hoping that at least this much is gained—that in future you will not look upon the religions of the world as accidental, but as springing up under the government and rule of that Almighty Father who is not the God of the Jew only, but of all men; who watches their efforts to come to Him, their efforts to know Him, who is a Spirit, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

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THE FALL OF MAN: A QUESTION REOPENED.

Morning, August 27th, 1876.

"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."—LUKE xiii. 1–5.

THOSE of you who are instructed, will remember that the great name of Aristotle lay for a long time as a hindrance to increase of knowledge, veracity of observation, and truthfulness of statement. He was sworn to, as the Bible has been sworn to by theologians. As to the sun and moon, they were

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not witnesses to be more called into account than he. He was a bar to the increase of knowledge, and an oppressive weight upon the life of men. Bacon, in his time, finding him to be a terrible oppression, did much to throw off the load.

But there is one thing which is wanted more than a revolt against Aristotle, and that is, a revolt against the usual theory of Revelation. It is the greatest hindrance to observation and promoter of falsity, the greatest preventer of inquiry, and of candid statement that exists. Until of late, Revelation was supposed to extend to everything. Many of you were brought up to believe in the little span of man's age, as given in the Old Testament Scriptures; to believe that a few thousands of years back man was not; to take the statements of the early chapters of Genesis as though they were whispered of God, man being the reporter of the heavenly observations; that man was cursed in God's name for eating an apple: that God made direct communication to man concerning bones and stones and dates, and all that business. As though any soul serving the Living God could be affected by such things as that!

In the old days, this Revelation was regarded as so final, that anything which would not coincide with

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it was asked to retire. If a man would rise up and disbelieve, he was called "Atheist," and burned for the greater glory of God. For those were times of faith, you know, when men burned one another in this way. But by-and-by Galileo came, and he asked questions, and called in question the whole business. Then other men arose, and all these things were inquired into, and these pretty legends were reduced to what they are—legends, and nothing more. But then the ecclesiastics came in, and said, "Thus far shalt thou go, but no farther." For the priests part with absurdity with reluctance, and never like common sense, if it is possible to be avoided.

A great deal of Greek history was relegated to the land of fable and of myth. But they said, We will give up that, if you please, and keep this. One literature was written on the earth, and the other was written in heaven; one set of speculations was spun, like a spider web, out of what is in a man, the other was handed to him from above. So these distinctions prevailed. The history of the Hebrews was not like the history of the Romans; they received their history ready made for them. So criticism was crippled. But, by degrees, it was found that the Jewish history contained within

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itself discrepancies, though they were such as only went to prove the honesty of the writers. It was found that the same thing, written by different people, appeared as different as the statements in a Conservative and Liberal newspaper. If they coincided in every particular, one would not be so likely to believe in their general veracity. If six of you were to tell the same tale in exactly the same manner, I should not believe your story. There must be some discrepancy. A man knows that that is to be expected in all history. No records, written by different people, can agree in every particular. If the Four Gospels agreed in everything, I should agree with none of them.

So the Jewish history had to submit to this, as the Jewish cosmogony had done before. However, as the great thing in fighting is to rally the forces, and bring up the troops to fight again; so people have made a great fight upon history and morals. Now, I am not going to trouble you with Roman history, cosmogony, and so forth. But amongst many of you there is a notion that if any great man is satisfied about anything, the thing is, therefore, true. Now, having in my early days wandered into companies made up of good people and mild curates, I have heard them argue thus, "If Sir

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Isaac Newton was able to discover the law of gravitation, then his interpretation of the prophecies must be true." What twaddle! The one thing he *observed;* the other thing he only dreamed. So, they say, "Virgil believed in God, *therefore* God is." But they never mention that Lucretius did not believe in God, in the ordinary sense. One of the constant faults of people, is to say that, because a great man is right on one point, therefore he cannot be wrong on another. Milton is called into court. Now, is there any more security that Milton shall not be mistaken on a moral question, than that Newton should not be mistaken about the rising of the sun, or the circulation of the blood, or the falling of the dew? What shall be your guarantee that they are not mistaken in these things?

Some of you take it for granted that these men cannot go wrong about a moral question. But then there are other people who will ask questions. Tiresome people! How is it, they say, that people who don't know anything about the circulation of the human blood, do yet know all about the human heart, its sins and faults? How was it that men were left to have their blood circulating in their bodies without knowing it, and were not left to have sin in their souls without knowing of its origin?

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Then "revelation" comes in, and observation is killed, and all questioning is over. The moment you get to a moral question, then you give yourselves over to saints, scriptures, churches, and what not. You would be ashamed to believe that your blood did not circulate, now that the fact of the circulation of the blood has been fully established; and yet you continue to believe that man is totally depraved? "Ah! but that is a moral question; you must not dispute that!"

Then, with regard to that notion about the speedy end of the world. How those men misunderstood the words of Christ! With the wretched literalism and narrow patriotism of their own hearts, they narrowed Christ down to some private notion of their own; and the simpletons got hold of the belief that in a little time the world would come to an end. Don't get married, they said, or buy houses, or take long leases; for the world won't last two years. But now, speaking of modern men, I would only ask you one or two questions. What would you say to any one who should ask you what is your guarantee that the men who believe that the world is immediately coming to an end, or those that believe that the end of the earth is waited upon by the sun, or that man is more than five

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thousand years old, I say, what is your guarantee that the one is right, and the other wrong? That a man who makes a statement about the origin of sin, or the end of it, from his reading of the Book of Genesis, and he who judges of these things through his observation of the moral methods of God,—I say, what guarantee have you that a man is perfectly infallible on the one point, and is left to himself on the other? You bring in "revelation." But we will leave revelation for a moment, and see what Christ did.

I suppose you will grant that the Old Testament was as much a revelation to the Jew, as the New Testament is to you? And that the Jew was as bound to make his observations of life tally with his reading of revelation, as you are bound to make your observations of life tally with yours? "Yes," you say. Now, then, here came these gossips to Christ, and said, "The tower of Siloam has fallen, and has killed eighteen men." But Christ saw what was behind the gossip, and he taught them a revolutionary doctrine. They came there, full of their old pleas, and they said, "Here were so many people, and the tower fell on them, and killed them. What a set of people they must have been, that the tower should fall on them!

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Could a tower fall, except upon a rascal?" They thought not. That was their belief. To affirm what was against a man, was to affirm the cause of his disaster. They belonged to that school who said that, God being a just Governor, if anybody got whipped, it must have been because they were rascals. So these eighteen men, they thought, *because they were sinners*, were made to select the right path, and to pass by at the right moment, that the tower might fall on them, and they might be killed.

And he who wrote that wondrous psalm of St. Asaph * was put out because he did not find things to be what it was said they were. For the priests said, "If you see a man with plenty of flocks and herds, and with handsome daughters and sons, that is a good man." So also they said to Job, "You were a good man once; you had all that heart could wish; but now your sons and your daughters are gone, and you have lost all your possessions, and you are in a fearful plight, body and soul. You must have been up to something. What have you been doing?" "No, no," said honest Job, "I have been righteous, and have done justice; my

* Psalm lxxiii.

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name was music in the ears of the poor; I have done no special wrong, to bring this upon me." There has nothing been written in this world so full of dramatic beauty and glorious depth of searching for the truth as this Book of Job. "No," said Job, "I deny the charge. I am poor and wretched, sick and diseased, I know; but I am righteous; I have not lost my integrity." And he did well to stand up for it. *There* was a protest against orthodoxy! And that sweet saint, St. Asaph, had been plagued in the same way. He knew some men who were very comfortable, with their purses well-lined, prosperous and well-to-do people; but they were *bad* men. That nearly upset him. It was not what he had been brought up to believe. But, "then went I into the sanctuary of God," said he, "and considered their end." But very few people saw *that* side of the question. The general belief was that those who suffered misfortune were sinners, and that those who walked in silk attire were therefore walking in robes of righteousness.

But you and I know that not every rich man is a good man. No, indeed! Those of you who have got the most money, have not necessarily got the most honesty. No, no. I humbly hope it may be so, but I fear not. Prosperous people are too often

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prosperous in spite of what is wrong. In the old days, they had got a theory something like this: "If God rules (and He does); if justice be apportioning good to the righteous man, and evil to the sinner (and it is); then it must follow that the lean man is a bad man, and the fat man is of necessity a saint." "Well, now," some of you say, "I cannot think how people could ever have thought so." But David did; St. Asaph did; Moses did, to some extent, though not to the extent which has been generally supposed. For you remember the oracular way in which Moses sometimes speaks, as though he were promising something not necessarily connected with any cause. "Do so and so," he says, "and thy days shall be long in the land:" as though he had kept the blessing, until he saw how the man was behaving. So, then, in a certain sense, I say to you, Do this or that, and you shall have health.

"But how comes it," you say, "that men like these have made mistakes about the laws of life? I can't make it out." No, but I can. I suppose there are people now who pray for rain. You have done it yourselves in the course of your life. How could you do it? In the Church of England there are fifteen thousand priests, and when there is a

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drought, the order comes to them to pray for rain, and so they turn on the prayers. Now, where the connection is between the Church Service and the clouds, between the Order in Council and the prayer by the Archbishop, I don't see. But what am I to do? If I listen to my church, I ought to pray for rain; but then, when I find that I have got a notion that a storm is on its way, and will probably be here before I have made my prayer, I don't see it. I should consider it an impiety on my part, to pray for rain, when I knew that it was already on the way. If my returning child were opening the gate, and I could see him at it, would it not be better that my time should be taken up in running to embrace him, rather than in falling down to pray for his return? So then, if science can detect the cool breath of coming rain, and can feel already its life; time is better taken up with looking after seed, and sowing it just in time for the coming storm, than in opening the Prayer-book, and grinding out prayers for what has already come.

"How could those people believe that all prosperous people were saints, and that all unfortunate people were sinners?" Do you ask *how* could they? Why, because they were young, young in knowledge. They were *told* so, and they did not wake

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up to deny it, because their observation was not keen enough for them to see that their popular theory was wrong. And do you think that any chatter about dates, or the circulation of the blood, or the origin of storms, is more shocking to what used to be the orthodox notions about these things, than what Christ said in regard to that old faith in prosperity as the reward of virtue, and poverty as the punishment for sin? For, except when honest Job stormed against it, that was the accepted doctrine of the older time. But Christ comes, and says, "Look here, it is nothing of the kind." Here comes this new Teacher, and says, "I tell you, you are all wrong; those men who have come to grief, no more deserved grief by their conduct, than any of the rest who escaped."

Here was a new, revolutionary doctrine, which shook the very pillars of God. The very foundations of righteousness were assailed by Christ—at least, to their thinking. For to be fat in the body, was looked upon by them as a sign of righteousness; while leanness, begun in the soul, extended to the carcase.

Men got on very well before they knew that their blood circulated; they could eat, drink, and be merry. But if, as there is abundant evidence

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to show, men of the largest power of observation, the acutest, wisest men of old, were yet utterly wrong about the circulation of their own blood, where is your guarantee that, since the time of Christ, there has been an examination so minute, into the origin of evil, the fall and redemption of man, as to make it quite certain that these things are settled beyond inquiry, defined beyond dispute? Of course the religious life of this country is built up on the assumption that everything is settled, and cannot be disturbed. The assumption of the religious man of this country is that, since Christ's time at least, there can be no new question opened with regard to the nature of evil, and the salvation of man. Man has fallen and sin has become an inherent plague in him. You cannot question these things; for they are entirely settled. Who says so? Why say they are settled, more than those things which were unsettled by Christ?

Now, I am not going to preach any particular doctrine, but I would ask you this question, Why is it forbidden to inquire whether there is any support for the old doctrine of Paradise and the Fall of Man? Of course some of you will be angry at the question. One does not like to hear that one has not been so much better off as one

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supposed. The bastard descendant of a lord, is anxious to establish his parentage. One does not like to be deprived of one's *losses*. People who have had losses, never forgot to tell you so, because it shows you what they once were. Many of you won't like to have your "fall" disputed. But why should not that question be opened again? "Oh, that is settled," you say. Indeed! Who settled it? "Revelation." Oh! revelation made to whom? "I think Moses, but I am not quite sure." Not a very admirable plan, I should say, to go into court, and not know who wrote the document!

But now I will ask you another question. Do you hold that the history of creation, as written in the Book of Genesis, is in harmony with modern observation? "Oh, no," you say, "I have given that up." Very well. Then, having given up part, why make an election for the other part? If you find it honestly wrong in one matter, why not affirm it to be wrong in the other, when all the evidence goes to prove that it is so? The man of science can neither elect nor select. No, no. The thing that *is*, only *that* he sees. St. George's dragons are gone, because they are no longer allowable in science. But that you should quietly take it for granted that you have got done with one

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part of a narrative, because you have found out that the wise men of that day were mistaken on that point, and yet that you should insist that their statement on another point is infallible, is what I can't understand. "Oh, well, that is a matter of revelation," you say. So was the other, yesterday! The larger and stupider part of the world still believe that that statement in the Book of Genesis with regard to creation is unassailable. You and I don't. But then comes another part of the narrative, containing other things that are found to be assailable. But you won't venture any further. You consider these things as settled. You maintain that the doctrine of the Fall, for instance, cannot be touched. Now, why? Is it open to observation? If not, then let the old document stand, by all means. But is there anything around us, that is observable to us, that can shed light upon the question? Did man begin from the lowest origin, the smallest beginning, as it were, and grow gradually on and on; or was he at once placed in a higher state than we now find him in, and from which state he fell?

All things are open to be observed. There is nothing too sacred, nothing so intricate, but must be content to be brought forward for observation.

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It is not my place, however, nor, perhaps, in my power, to gather together those things which shed light upon this question; but I ask you to consider this. Is there anything to be observed in the world around us, and in the history of man, that makes it doubtful whether man ever had a fall? If there is, and if the statement of the fall of man cannot stand the light of that observation, then it will have to be exposed, and must receive the same fate as the other statements have done.

Then comes the question of total depravity. "Oh," you say, "*that* is settled." Who settled it? No, it is not settled for me. I am to watch and look for evidence. It is an open question, and only observation can settle it. The popular notion is that our misfortune lies in being the descendants of Adam; for that Adam, having fallen, all that come after him are inherently diseased. Now, is that true? I say, No. Sin, or what men call sin, is to the soul what measles are to the body, and is as much to be thrown off as are the vile habits and customs of ancient times. Revel in disease, if you will; be proud of having a vile inherent nature, if you please; but the question is open, and will have to be discussed.

There are difficulties in the way, I know, because

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you have a great many early prejudices to overcome, which are all against a sensible inquiry into these matters. But, if sin be a curable disease, then Christ's grandest title is "Physician," rather than "Sacrifice." If the Great Healer, by developing all that is lovely in man, shall make man ashamed to be dirty and grovelling, and shall cause him to go to the Great Fountain of God's Love; shall sheath the sword, and put an end to disease; then the world must see that the title of "The Great Physician" is a nobler one than that which the priests want to give him—"Vicarious Sacrifice," or "Atoner." If sin be a disease, then what is wanted is the Physician, the Light of Life, the Water of Life, the Bread of Life. But if man, by no fault of his own, was born into sin, from which he can never be rid, and for which he is in danger of being damned everlastingly, oh, then there is room for Sacrifice and Priest. Then comes in the whole business—Paradise lost, Sacrifice and Priesthood, Baptismal Regeneration and Salvation by water. Anything, anything but Salvation by the Spirit.

The religion of this country hangs upon the settlement of this question. Hence the wrath of some people at the discussion of these things. But that they will have to be discussed, is certain. You

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and I are not afraid—some of us—that, under wise guidance, we may be enabled to look into the matter. But if any of you think that these things threaten to take away any of your privileges, you need not be alarmed. If they are *divine* privileges, you will keep them. If you look back to your Paradise, and find that you have lost it, and if it is painful to you to find that Hell is gone, why, then, you had better remember what the poet says—

> "'Tis better to have loved and lost,
> Than never to have loved at all."*

Some of you are not interested in these things. Those who are so, will think them quietly over, and consider whether it is not within the scope of observation to shed light upon these questions about the Fall of Man, the Total Depravity of Man, and, particularly, upon the Method of Salvation, and the Way of Life. If, after examination, you should find that there is no phenomenon which can shed light upon these questions, then hang them up as settled; but, if any light can be shed upon them, then in life, and God grant in death, may our eager cry be for light. The dying cry of the wisest children of our time has been for "Light—

* Tennyson's "In Memoriam," section xxvii.

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more light."* If these old notions, then, are found to be inconsistent with the light, let them vanish. They lived in the body once; let them now become ghosts; and, having become so, let them not visit you again. Put them amongst the things to be cast into the land of shadows. Send them away as nurses' stories—stories of the early, simple, childlike, undeveloped ages of the world.

* The last audible words of Goethe were, *More light!* Jean Paul Richter, who became blind eight days before his death, many times raised his darkened eyes to the window, hoping a faint ray would pierce the gloom; and once, in the most touching voice, cried out with Ajax in the Iliad—

> "If we must perish, we Thy will obey,
> But let us perish in the light of day."

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THE NEW COVENANT GROWING OLD.

Morning, September 3rd, 1876,

"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

"For, finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." —HEBREWS viii. 7, 8.

IF you remember that the Covenant is asserted to have been made and given by God, and then you hear that God found fault with it, and because it was worn out and threadbare another had to come, the asserted divine authority of the document makes the change by which it was superseded the more memorable. Those of you who suffer your hearts to be stirred about the changes that come over all human ways, institutions, creeds, gospels, and so forth, may as well be at peace, for, according to this writer, the Covenant made by God wore out, a

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garment of God went to rags, a vesture of man's soul, supplied by the Almighty, became threadbare, and God "*found fault* with it."

We waive the question to-day, touching the nature of revelation, or how far God could whisper His revelations into mortal ear, or lay them down in the shape in which they are found in mortal tongue; we leave all this untouched, in order to look into this principle. For I think you will see that, if things that God is said to have ordered, by-and-by become preposterous so that no good man can tolerate them, then you need not trouble yourselves about any smaller matters. If the heavenly Covenant cannot stay, human institutions may be certainly under the same rule. For if the astronomer tells me that even the sun does, by-and-by, wear itself out, I cannot greatly wonder that my poor taper should come to an end. If this great round world shall by-and-by go, do not agitate yourselves if your little institutions show signs of the "crack of doom," too. One hears nowadays so much whimpering about the decay of old things. But if the divine Covenant has gone to rags, who needs to mourn about the little inventions of man—the catechisms, the Thirty-nine Articles, and other temporary statements? "Out of thine own

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mouth shalt thou be judged." According to you, this covenant was made by God Himself, and yet He found fault with it, and gave a substitute. If, then, over the divine work change and decay comes, what little thing have you to offer as permanent? Why should you go about the world whimpering at changes, when God Himself shall draw the heavens together as a vesture, and all shall pass away?

One of our first duties is to find out that all human institutions, and all divine ones, are only for a time, enduring until the germ of the institution or constitution reaches the largest possible development; and then decay's effacing finger begins its work. No sooner does the fruit come to its full richness, no sooner has the sun put his last finger-touch upon the peach, than decay begins, and that vesture, so splendid, is found to contain a stone, and that stone is but a sepulchre which contains a seed. Yet from the seed shall come another splendour of outward vesture, which the stone of the sepulchre doth but veil for a moment. There must be resurrection. The stone must be rolled away; for the new life is better than the old. The seed must fall; for the new truth must be born.

When a king was first wanted, it did not need

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that heaven should be opened, in order to tell men to make one. After the establishment of the kingship, the necessity of organization and discipline, the feeling of loyalty and obedience, all kept flowing into this institution, and so, by-and-by, the little king has his day of bloom. To-day you see him in African feathers and a little paint; by-and-by he will blossom into "His Highness," or "His Most Sacred Majesty," and must be clothed in silk, velvet, and gold. Then fools adore and knaves are envious. At last we have to say concerning the kingly compact, "If that Covenant had been faultless, then should no place be sought for the second." Now that Protestantism is getting to be more understood, one looks at the royal robe, and sees, without a sigh, the moth getting into it; one beholds the ermine, and sees it getting out of repair. But these things are still necessary, for man must be "of age" before he can part with them. The old world is not twenty-one yet. They will have to pass away though, when they have had their day and can no longer hold the life of an instructed world.

Then, by-and-by, the people want a priest. That religion must be a fearful terror which leads people to want priests—brokers, mediators between themselves and God. Conscious of sin, full of feebleness,

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man dares not look unto the heavens alone. Now, wherever there are fools, eagles will gather; for fools bring knaves. So, partly from necessity, and partly through men's fears being worked upon by a fine knavery, the priest appears. He beats a tom-tom, offers sacrifices, and, by-and-by, like the king, he too becomes grand, until at last, he is "Pope infallible," "Christ's Vicar upon earth." That is the highest thing that priesthood can come to. It has had its foot upon the king's neck, shaken earth with war, and, last of all, has become "infallible!" But one looks at it, and sees that it is getting ragged, that its vesture is beginning to fall about, the velvet is becoming threadbare. Some pretend to believe in it still; but they don't succeed. First an antiquity, now a scarecrow, by-and-by men will smile that ever such a thing as that should have been needed.

So one might review all the figures in this world, and find them "passing away." The day shall come when the conqueror and the soldier, which are still necessary, shall be abolished, "fault being found" with them. We find this also in our law. It is wonderful what things are to be found in old law books! We marvel how men ever got inside all these old vestments, cooped and confined as they

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must have been. In their day those laws were good ; but now they are done with, and have passed away.

But now let us examine the objection made by some of you, that "all this is very true in human matters ; but with religion you have the revelation of God, which cannot change." Ah ! we don't need any revivals of theology ; we have got too many *sur*vivals, and are too much engaged in fetching out vestments, and in tumbling of rags into their proper places. You say that revelation came from God, and that it is fixed. Then what do you make of this—"Finding fault with them, He saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a *new* Covenant." And again, "In that He saith, a new Covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Here is a new Covenant made ancient. Did it ever strike you that the old Covenant was once new ? "Well, but," you say, "the new Covenant under Jesus Christ is different." Why ? Now, you orthodox people, tell me, where is the patent by which Christianity can be saved from the decay that came over the Religion of the Jews ? "Well, but," you say, "the words of Christ, they pass not away." No. He who, standing long

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ago as the image of God to man, by preaching doctrines to the world far, far beyond the present; Christ, of the second Advent, who comes again into this world (that is, when his doctrine comes, and when all men know it); if *he* take the words of eternal life, and teach them, they cannot pass away; for they be things which cannot change, being founded upon the simplicities of God and man. No, I am not talking about the words of Christ, but of the long collection of hay, wood, and stubble, piled up around that corner-stone of all, which is—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself."

Round the simple teaching of Jesus Christ, you know how all manner of things gather. You have thought of the case of Nicodemus, whose eyes were opened to know that he must be "born again," into a new kingdom that knows no pedigree. For you must not let Jesus Christ talk after the fashion of a shouting Revivalist preacher. Oh no. To this ruler in Israel, trusting in Abraham as his ground of acceptance with God, he says, 'You have been born once unto Abraham; you must be born now unto Christ. That old pedigree is done with; you must be born again."

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As all nations shall be partakers together of the glory of God, all nations must be born again. Christ's words are so prophetic, that they antedate all things. Ever near, ever distant, the religion of Jesus Christ must be the universal solvent of the nonsense swallowed by the dupes of magicians and theologians. Now it is not about the simple law, or about the heart of Christ's religion, but about matters connected with these words that you have to consider this morning. Peter, twice born, was taught to call nothing common or unclean. He who had been a Jew of the Jews, and who had been sound on circumcision, became an arrant Gentile. But, by-and-by, he falls back again into the old Covenant, and, monstrous thing! proposes to circumcise his converts. No wonder that the glorious man of the Gentiles (St. Paul) looked with suspicion upon this Jew, and before them all lifted up his hands aghast, and "withstood Peter to the face." Again Paul cries, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, but want to go back to bondage? Healed of your Judaic impotence, you want to go back to the miserableness of circumcision." Paul said, "I resolved to know nothing but Christ and him crucified." What did he mean? "There is no need

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of a divine *sacrifice;* a *spiritual surrender* is all I shall talk about. I, Paul, will not suffer this new Covenant to be the miserableness of the law; neither shall I take this new child, and make it utter a shibboleth or dogma of a worn-out theology."

Christ had to take his stand against a worn-out theology. The carpenter's son comes up from Nazareth, and has to preach that God is the Father of all men, the lover of all men, the healer of woes, the "Good Shepherd," the "Holy Ghost, the Comforter." And what did Paul say in his great letter? "This Christ that I preach is *foolishness.*" And he said again: "The wisdom of man is foolishness to God, and the foolishness of God is the cross of Christ. The world's wisdom is folly in God's eyes, and God's folly (as the world thinks it) is divine wisdom." Now nine-tenths of theology is stuff that has been gathered by the gospel as it came down the ages, from all the schools with which it has had acquaintance, until at last the coat of the Church has as many colours as the coat of the patriarch.

Now, then, if things said to be divine in the old Covenant shall pass away, why not so with the second? Not that I believe that a large part of what you *call* Christianity has anything to do with it. A

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large part of the popular theology is nothing but a series of maps of a country which nobody ever saw; observations made in the dark; elaborate surveys of No-man's Land; accurate charts of the unknown. What can save these things? Nothing. They must go. The rule that is applicable to all nations, is applicable to all thoughts—to every great theological thought—you cannot "save" it, and need not try. As long as it is expressive of what men feel to be truth of their nature, it lives, but no longer. Every new question will have to be re-examined. The last one is the Fall of Man. Of course we have all accepted it; for what could we do? Moses asserted it; Milton affirmed it, and Milton is supposed to know more about it than anybody else. The fall of man was never so distinct till Milton explained it or imagined it. So it is thought to be "better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all." Watching with a keen eye the doings of people, I have met with those who would rather boast that their great grandfather was coachman to a nobleman, than have nothing to do with the nobility. But suppose that, by-and-by, the gathering of testimony from scientific observation, as applied both to lower life and to man's history, should show that there has been a gradual *ascent*—that there is

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no period in the history of humanity at which man has not been *rising* towards higher and better things—may not that story of the fall of man be put among the other old legends, which are doomed to pass away? That is a question which cannot be settled at present. You need not distress yourselves, however, if you feel that you have lost something good. If it can explain more mysteries, and clear up more problems, to know that man's growth has been a much longer one than you imagined, what matter? Let the legend of the Fall pass away.

Now, do you tell me that anywhere else, except in theological regions, and the land of sin, of which some are so fond, there is any evidence to show that man has fallen? When five hundred musicians, under the guidance of one man, pile up the *Last Judgment*, which stirs you to the soul, and melts you to tears, if you cannot see the doom of the savage *tom-tom* music, then I have done. All the music of the naked savage consists of bumping and thumping; but that up-built man has caught the music of the spheres! Do you think there has ever been a fall of man in music? Well, perhaps you think it your pharisaical duty to believe that man has been going back even in that, ever since the creation of the world. But from the tom-tom

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of the savage to Spohr's *Last Judgment*, I say man *mounts*. How divinely inspired is that great work! Yes, but theologians infect everything, and so they say, "This is not written on the old model. It is an innovation. I don't catch Handel here." Who asked you to catch Handel? Is there to be no future of music? Is your half-opened ear to limit man for ever? No. Into harmonious intricacies yet unexplored will the musician of the future explore, and men and women who are oppressing us with their feeble groanings shall learn that onward all these things must march.

And you, having set your seal upon the progress of man, oh, take it off. There shall be no stone rolled against the future of the spirit of man. Further and further on he must go, till he escapes all traditions and all bonds. Meditating on what is said of God, I say I find fault with these old beliefs, and desire that a new Covenant should take their place.

One of a class of the great works of true science is to measure the great distance from the bloodless worship of a loving God, whose sacrifices are a broken heart and a contrite spirit, whose thank-offering is a song, whose praise is the open mouth of a thankful heart; from that, backward, to the

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days of a bloody altar, the wrung necks of pigeons, and sweet doves with their feathers all soiled with blood, through the regulations of Moses. Is not the day of Christ as long and as glorious as that early day? If you watch all that history of sacrifice, how did it begin? Well, those of you who know human nature, will know how it began. Of course, if the theologian cannot make up his mind that God ordered sacrifice in the first place, he is never at a loss; for if there is nothing about it in the Bible, he will put it in. Remember how, when examining the question of the Personality of the Devil, we found the theologian saying that "the reason Moses made no mention of him, was that the Jews were prone to idolatry, and if Moses had said anything about him, they would have been fascinated into worshipping him." So, they say, the Scriptures are silent, for similar reasons, as to the origin of sacrifice. Moses nowhere mentions any command of God as originating sacrifice. Well, some of us will think that that is rather an important omission; that it is rather strange, while sacrifice was to cover the heaven with smoke, and fill the earth with blood, it should be left in uncertainty whether God was the author of it. But the divine sees the difficulty, and is

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equal to the occasion. This omission is not at all to be wondered at! Since there must have been a command, there *was* a command, but Moses has omitted any mention of it in his history.

But is it likely, as asserted in that strange history, that He, God, should be exceedingly gratified if men killed doves, and rams, and lambs, and bullocks, in His service; and that the way for a man to procure His favour should be to spread over the horizon the smoke of sacrifice, and at last to find no better sacrifice than the child of his own body, the darling of his own heart? Is it likely that if God had been the author of all that, it would have been omitted to be mentioned? No. It is in the twilight of man's history that the origin of sacrifice is to be found. The germ of all doctrines is to be found in the spirit of past things. For there is but one soul, and therefore the forms of all things have been the shadows of things that have been and that are to come.

Where, then, shall we seek for the origin of sacrifice? In the nature of man. If his gods (which are like himself) are strong, angry, violent, vehement, the gods must be pacified by a gift. And when man projects the image of himself upon the clouds, and calls it God, then those things

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which he finds acceptable among the strong and cruel in the earth, he considers acceptable to God. Thus it was that sacrifice sprang up, and lived and grew, until it is said that men caused their sons and their daughters to pass though the fire unto Molech; that fathers, instead of sacrificing *themselves* (which might have been noble), offered up their little children as sacrifices to their gods.

But when Moses came, he arranged it all, and made it scientific. He classified it, and made it methodical. He looked at men's heave-offerings, peace-offerings, trespass-offerings, and offerings of all sorts; and he elaborated them, and made them politic, and a part of the national life. But slowly, slowly, all these things begin to show decay. And now another prophet gets up, and gives a great rent at the tabernacle. David, all a-tremble with sin (and he is too passionately sinful a man, and too deeply spiritual a man to be mistaken), fresh from sin; new from the hot embraces of that woman for whom he forgot his God; that passionate man looked at the goats and bullocks, and with holy scorn turned and said, "The sacrifices of God are a broken heart, and a contrite spirit." *

* Psalm li.

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That was a great rent given to the sacrificial business. And there is no more glorious psalm than that where the Psalmist speaks of God as requiring no sacrifices of this kind—"If I were hungry, I would not tell thee."* Then came the laughing prophet, that grand prophet who, with divine scorn, could talk with such mocking mirth—"You had better pray louder," he says, "perhaps your god is out: perhaps he is on a journey." And so they howled, and cut themselves with lancets. And perhaps that was the best thing they could do. At any rate, it was better than cutting up sacrifices, or substituting some one else. At length, the curl of the smoke became more feeble, and the air got purer; the smoke of sacrifice, like the smoke of filthy chimneys, grew less and less, and the sky became more blue. Until, at last, that mother went up to the temple, and took "a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons."

But what has Christ to do with pigeons? Ah! let the poor dove die, when the little Christ is carried into the temple: let the dove die in peace; for that Child shall one day teach that there shall be no more of these things; that the dove shall

* Psalm l.

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no longer be made a sacrifice, but shall be lifted up as a sweet, soft emblem of the Holy Ghost; and we shall hear that the Holy Ghost Himself descended in the form of a dove, as an eternal symbol of the tender-hearted God, a perpetual reminder of the comforting of the Father.

And now these old sacrifices go altogether. Even the Jew gives them up. No longer shall rams or lambs be slain upon the altars of God. That great strong man, the Apostle Paul, went to war, not against principalities and powers of the political world, but against powers in high places, against Venus, Jupiter, Apollo, and the whole Pantheon, and, with seemingly only a sling and a stone, wounded Jupiter on the forehead, brought Venus down into her native disgrace and shame, sent the priest going, sheathed the knife, and saved the ram, the lamb, and the goat. And now, for the best parts of the world, sacrifice is no more. You no more dream of pleasing God by killing a beast, than by running a knife into your own back because you can measure the amount of pain, and, according to your notion, the amount of desert. Sacrifice, however divine you may say it was, is now dead and gone.

Here we stay, because the next question is too

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serious and too long to discuss now, viz.: How far was the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary a legal sacrifice, or a spiritual sacrifice? because, until you understand that, you will still be apt to look upon these old sacrifices as the shadowing forth of the doctrine of vicarious redemption to which the Jewish nation looked. We repeat it, for the sake of this thought: Was the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary the *only* sacrifice towards which all previous ones pointed, and the nature of which can be explained by those previous ones? or was it the true sacrifice, the life willingly laid down, that God might be all in all? And what is the form of circumcision in which the Christian church is cast? Is it the circumcision of thought—the Judaism of the spirit? Is it the seamless robe of Christ, dipped in sacrifice? or is it the last triumph of the soul, the prophecy of cessation of all evils, the fulfilment of Christ's own prayer—"Not my will, but Thine be done"? "Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Thy kingdom, O Lord, reign for evermore."

Now, on the settlement of this question most of your objections will be either confirmed or dispersed. "Vicarious sacrifice" is a revival and a survival. But the high spiritual interpretation of

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the sacrifice of Christ is the only one for me. Across those words "vicarious sacrifice" I write "passing away for ever," and with all my soul and with ever increasing vision, I read, "God so *loved* the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son to die for it." That is the one thing. Understand *that* in its sweetness, and there is no use in telling you that God could not forgive sinners until He had been paid; and that the price was blood, and that the sentence written across God's mercy-seat was "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins" (though that is not asserted once in the Scriptures).*

What can abide, if what you say was "the old Covenant" went to pieces? If that Covenant went to pieces, may *we* not also begin to look for the seed bearing? So may humanity learn to say, "When I was a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

* Hebrews ix. 22 is often misunderstood.

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THE EVOLUTION OF MAN, A DOCTRINE NOT TO BE DREADED.

Morning, August 6th, 1876.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."—LUKE x. 27.

OUR faith being contained in this simple and sublime statement, I propose this morning to leave all the conflicts of the "orthodox" and "heterodox," of Ritualists, and others, except to look at them as amusing survivals, out of place and born to die. Let us turn to the much more charming, serious, and, as orthodox people would say, "dangerous" doings of the men of science.

Let me lay down first a few things about which we shall probably all be agreed. To a *wise* man, there can be no quarrel between science and theology; to *foolish* men of science and *foolish*

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men of theology, there is such a quarrel. Theologians have tried to coerce science within their doctrines of theology; but this attempt is unphilosophical, and utter nonsense. It is obstructive of science, and will not serve "religion," as it is called; though, since true religion can never be changed, let us say it will not serve *theology.*

To show that it is unphilosophical, we have to lay down first of all that no speculation shall be controlled by an order of conceptions not presupposed by it. For instance, who ever dreamed of controlling poetry by mathematics? Religion, in the true sense, cannot be controlled by science, neither can it control science; for the conceptions involved in one are not presupposed by the other. And if this is true of speculation, how thoroughly true it must be of observation. How can theology control observation? Yet that is what is attempted to be done around us. The observations of the man of science are to be limited by theology, and speculations are to lie against fact in order to save some old theory! Where speculation can only be controlled by conceptions presupposed in its own domain, observation cannot be controlled by anything.

Some of you are angry if a person says that

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men once had tails. What are you angry for? "Well," you say, "it is not consistent with——" With what? "Well, with what I have been *taught*." If, however, a man of science tells you that such and such a thing is the case; if it is accurately observed and scientifically shown, it cannot lead, legitimately, to any mischief. Therefore, instead of showing your little anger, the better way would be to set to work resolutely to see if the conclusions are legitimate; and, if so, to give up your preconceptions in favour of the truth. To those of you who have no dread of investigation, and who only want to know what the truth is, there is nothing in the conclusions from any speculation or observation that will stir up your terror or your wrath. If you find the result is legitimate, you had better spend your time in settling whether it would not be well to give up your own conclusions, and take what is proved to be the truth. For the leading of truth is the leading of God; and where He leads, man need not fear to follow.

When around religion men have allowed to grow up a series of things which they are pleased to *call* religion, and those outside fences are found to be incompatible with the further progress of discovery and observation, then comes the difficulty. And

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the difficulty comes very much by the assumption that the Old Testament is a revelation from God, touching certain things that belong to the domain of science, and that because God was pleased to impart—nobody knows when, nobody knows where, and nobody can accurately tell to whom—the history of the world, the date of man, and the order of creation, to observe as far as we can the visible things around us is to be infidel and unbelieving.

With regard to speculation, there is a doctrine put forth nowadays, which, in its consequences, will make a very great change in man. I do not say the doctrine is true; but let me put two theories before you. One theory is the old one—that man began in beauty, and fell; began in light, and dropped into darkness; began a child of God, and became a child of the Devil; was born in the estate of his Father, God, and was cast out to wander the weary, dreary wilderness until restoration should come. Therefore we have the splendid Adam, and the glorious Eve. Then came "the Fall." It is easy to understand how that doctrine arose. Men might easily come to the opinion that a good God could never have started man in the condition he is now in; and, conscious of their own sinfulness, they

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would fashion to themselves a day when man was worthy of his Maker. Thus, man was made in a state of glory, innocence, and splendour; and, by sinning, fell from his glorious estate, and passed from degradation to degradation, until at length the "Act to amend an Act" was passed, and restoration came! That may be true: I am not going to debate it just now.

But nowadays there come strange preachers, who declare that man never had any lofty ancestor or noble beginning. Instead of having dwelt in marble halls, and having become a sort of gipsy since, he began, perhaps, in the slime, and his course has been one of ascent—always ascent. Instead of his having had any "fall," he has had one unbroken rise; and although, now and then, it seems as if he had ceased to ascend, he is still ever ascending.

Let us now suppose a man with the Old Testament shut, his catechism forgotten, no churches near, and no theologians at hand. Suppose him to hear from a layman these two theories touching man—one that he has fallen from a high estate, the other that he has crept slowly but surely from a low estate to a higher one. Is there any valuable evidence or observation open to him by which he

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can settle which of these theories appears to be justified? The man of science says that such observations are possible, and he appears to be gathering together slowly and surely a body of facts. I am not impatient; neither should the theologians be impatient: least of all should *they* be impatient who can afford to wait. If men will make religion depend upon the important question of races, it will be different. We, however, can go on loving God and doing righteousness just the same.

The observations of men of science appear to be gathering thickly in favour of this theory of Ascent. But shall I be angry? Not at all. Moses will not be angry. If he is in any sphere now from which it is possible to contemplate the things of men, he will not be angry. No, if any great soul like that can look down, and see what is being done, he will be thankful that the light of God goeth on to perfect day. For aught you know, I may be a devoted believer in the fall of man; but my soul leans towards the other theory. I wish well to the observations of the man of science; for already he seems to explain a vast number of the difficulties that, hitherto, have been unexplained. Let us, therefore, weigh the two theories,

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and see which of them sheds most light upon human life.

"But, then, there is the Bible!" Well, I regard the Bible with increasing veneration and enlarging love, just because I have ceased to worship it with superstition, or to be bound down by it until my spiritual manhood is gone. Though the words of Scripture may be contrary to the observations of the man of science, the statements of the writers of Scripture were made in good faith; but, like many other antiquities, many of them are discarded because they are no longer true, because they are no longer accurate expressions. If the men of science establish the fact that from a low beginning man climbs gradually but surely to the perfection to which he seems to be coming—if they prove that, are we to refuse to believe them because of the Old Testament?

If the scientific man should be right, I would ask, What becomes of the "Fall of Man?" If man never fell, what becomes of the Fall? It will simply get placed along with many other curious things, become antiquated, become as an old map, or an old matchlock, and will pass away.

I ask you, however, of what great consequence it is, if there should have been no Fall? "Oh, then,"

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you say, "there would be no Redemption." Well, just as the old Jewish beliefs have passed away, so, if needs be, the *wooden cross* of Calvary must have the same fate, until at last it shall not come to be sought after. If the redemption of Christ shall be wrought out *in* man, and man shall become visibly in his actions a child of God, what matter what becomes of this, that, and the other—supposing that the light and truth of God remains inflowing into the human soul?

This Evolution theory cannot disturb me. It is, to me, quite as pleasant to have had a lowly beginning, and to have climbed to loftiness, as to have been lofty and to have gone down-hill. Which would you choose, now—to have been born a beggar, and to have achieved your present position? or to know that some one who came over with William the Conqueror was your ancestor, and that you have come down to be mean and commonplace? So, why should I be angry? The origin of races is not settled yet; but it does not make me angry. If a man says to me that he cannot receive me into the Church, unless I say "I believe that the Father is incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible; yet that there are not three incom-

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prehensibles, but one incomprehensible," I should say the whole thing was incomprehensible; and then I would go forth to the God who lives in love, whose ways are open to men, and who has taught men that to fear Him is to be wise, and to keep His commandments is to be truly intelligent. So, while the scientific men are settling these things about species, I propose that we go on trusting in God, loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves; and not ceasing to partake of the bread that never perishes, and the water of life. I am prepared to surrender all my own theological furniture when the scientific broker shall come to me with his distress, and say, "I levy in the name of love, in the name of truth and justice, upon all that old rubbish, and for the good of mankind you must give it up." I should say, "Good riddance; let it go."

As to the "survival of the fittest," and the theory that the weak must go to the wall, however that is the case in the lowest state of man, yet Christ came to save the miserable, to look after the lame and the cripples. This strange Teacher declared, instead of "the weak to the wall," the weak into the arms of charity and love! When I hear of "the weak to the wall," and that the fittest are to survive, then I

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say that without the cripple, the maimed, and the miserable; without the poor and the wretched, the *fittest* man—that is, the man of *charity*, is impossible.

When I see what Christ taught, I learn to look upon him, not only as the highest of moral teachers and the purest child of God, but as a man who grasped the science of the future, and showed us the last evolution possible to man—that of being a minister of charity whose duty it is to provide for the weak, and to make secure a gradual rise, until at last the spirit of Divinity has so reached man, that what Paul said shall be literally true—if one member is wounded, all shall feel it. For the time will come when the greatest happiness will not be that of the greatest number merely, but of *every member* of the human species; and when the sense of manhood shall be so fine that the highest man living will feel he cannot be happy until the lowest man has been brought out of his misery.

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THE ASCENT OF MAN FROM SAVAGERY.

Morning, May 30th, 1875.

"But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes.

"And Adoni-bezek said, Three-score and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me."—JUDGES i. 6, 7.

"When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind."—LUKE xiv. 13.

THAT marvellous passage in the Book of Deuteronomy which I read to you,* I saw was very unfamiliar to some of you, and even those who have read it were, perhaps, never struck with the mingled beauty and pathos in it. It is like that coat of little Joseph's—of many colours; but, like what that coat was after the father saw it, oh! so dyed in blood. It tells you that every wrong-

* Deut. xxii.

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doer captured in the city was to be put to death by stoning. And in another passage of that Old Testament, the commandment is given that every man, woman, and child shall be put to the sword.* The commandment is, of course, preceded by a "Thus saith the Lord;" for *that* trumpet must be blown before everything, whether it be the slaughter of innocents, or the making of a law. Then, in the twenty-second chapter, it tells you about the little birds and their nests, and bids you be merciful to them. And next it tells you to go out of your way to take back a man's cattle that have strayed. Such infinite sweetnesses and gentlenesses are there, yet such terrible vengefulness; so wrathful, yet so genial.

In the Law of Moses, rightly studied, we see the highest and divinest in man asserting itself amidst things that are low, fierce, carnal, brutal, and beast-like. Whether man is a fallen creature, or whether he began low down in the scale of creation and has worked his way up, I cannot tell you. I have never been in Paradise myself; and, dwelling always on the wrong side of it, I have never seen the "flaming sword," proclaiming on which side lies my life.

* Deut. vii. 2; xx. 16; ii. 34; and Joshua, chapters vi. and viii.

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But it is very certain that if you look to the facts of man's life, you will find that, whether any doctrine of evolution be scientifically true or not, there is working out of man, slowly, the ape, the tiger, the beast. For remember, in man is everything that is below man. There is nothing chemical, that is not in the body of man; there is no mechanical motion that does not find its perfectest example in man's organism; there is no element to which he does not claim relationship. Herbert says that everything serves man's body; but as man ascends into the spiritual, all things are made to serve his spirit.* And he says that man is a beast; but this should

* For us the winds do blow,
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow;
Nothing we see but means our good,
As our delight or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The stars have us to bed:
Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws;
Music and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kind
In their descent and being; to our mind
In their ascent and cause.

GEORGE HERBERT.

("George Herbert, the beautiful psalmist of the seventeenth century."—EMERSON.)

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not be so, for he should rise above the beast. But those of you who are fond of tracing resemblances, will find that all that there is in the lower creatures is still in us; although it may seem to be worked out, killed, put to death.

One of the most lovely studies in natural history is to see the gradual rise from the lowest to the loftiest, and to see how, as they come into the neighbourhood of man, all things borrow from him. The magpie and the parrot are there, to pick up the crumbs that fall from his table; and, by-and-by, they go to school to him, and learn his speech. The ape tells tales of relationship to man, and the monkey shows signs of a common brotherhood. A cage of monkeys is one of the chiefest pleasures to the satirist—one of the chief joys of the humorist. A monkey is almost the only creature who comes near to man in his pure love of mischief; they share it together. Then there is the ant; he has his savings bank and his store-house. Joseph in Egypt was not more provident than he. He lays up for the winter, and has stores against the time of frost. And some of the divinest instincts of man are seen in the little bees; they come very close to him in their republics, and queenships, and governments of all kinds. Whoso watches a hive of bees, watches

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heroics. If, with your finger-nail, you just scratch the mouth of the hive, you shall, in a moment, see two well-appointed sentinels come out to inquire what danger threatens the holy city; and then, when they are assured that all is right, in they go to take up their place again as guards of the house. And they understand sanitary laws; and carry them out, too! Man is the only creature who is deliberately nasty. Whoso watches the bees watches the instincts of humanity, and higher than those of average humanity.

In this wondrous world, each stone has a history, if we could but read it. All that is in man may be found *out* of man, and all that is below man has been gradually coming toward him. There is very much of the ape in man now, and you know it. Tigers, and all fierce things, dwell in him.

Wild beasts are naturally cruel; and man is not less cruel, in his savage state. Here, in this chapter of JUDGES, is a man who has made a feast. He has conquered three score and ten kings, and he has got them under his table; and he has cut off their thumbs and their great toes. What can we say, but that he is a beast—a savage beast? In him we see a mixture of civilisation and sneaking savagery. He is like a cat; for a cat is a beast in

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which these two things meet, and the meeting-points in this striped creature are savage cruelty, with a canting, mean, fawning, miserable sort of civilisation.

But there comes One who utters the perfect antithesis of that. The Lord says, "When thou makest a feast, call *to the board* the poor, the maimed, the lame, the halt, the blind." Here is the brutal man, with his maimed enemies put *under* the table, and here is God's Holy One who says, "Bring the maimed *to* the table, that they may feast."

Therefore, watching civilisation, we see that man has slowly to work out of himself, and then out of society, and then out of the wide world, all those creatures with whom he can have no true friendship—those creatures which are incompatible with his divinest nature. So, the noble hunter, who goes forth to slay the wild beasts of prey, is not to be confounded with the modern "sportsman." Whoso kills a lion, does well; whoso destroys a tiger, prepares the way of the Lord; whoso gets rid of the wild beast, prepares for the city, the book, the school, the church. The aboriginal hunter, who brings down these incompatible beasts, is not to be confounded with these "gentlemen" of

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modern times, who are enamoured of partridges, who become quite excited over a hare, and develop their little instinct by racing over the fields after a fox; who cannot kill anything at once, but whose delight it is to torture the poor animals as much as possible. There is much of the savage in the modern sporter. You may baptize him; but the tattoo marks still remain.

And if I were to take some of you, I should find in you a good deal of the savage. But no very intellectual men in this country are fond of sporting now; no very big-brained man cares much for this business. If you would turn rat-catcher, now, you would be doing something useful. *There*, there would be a necessity and occasion for your destructive powers, because the rat is an incompatible creature.

In all man's life, at whatever stage we find it, the incompatible beast is being worked out of him; all incompatible things are being worked out, and civilisation is bringing him slowly into the likeness of Jesus Christ, whose ethics were—"Love your enemies; do good to all men; destroy within thee the ape; erase the tiger; be gentle; be pitiful." He spake of God, not as a man of war, as did they who put a "Thus saith the Lord" before the slaying

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of helpless women and children by the edge of the sword, but he spake of Him as the Father, taking to His bosom the wounded, the lame, the halt, the blind, the prodigals.

I watch every man and woman I meet with; I take stock of them, and I say, "There is too much of the ape there;" "too much of the tiger left there;" "too much of the turnip there." Here I see a clod of clay, and there a beast, a brute. But it stirs no anger in me; only pity. Then I watch myself, and I find some things that will have to be cured. There is too much of Moses; too much of old Jewry; too much of the old savage. I must get it out!

So, whether there has been a "Fall," or not, it is clear that our business is to keep rising, getting ready for to-morrow. "Let the dead bury their dead," says Christ, "and follow, follow, follow thou Me unto Life." Thus is man being slowly redeemed to God.

Taking a passionate interest in these things, and watching keenly, one is able to put down every man and woman according to where they stand in history, and to say how much of the ape, or the tiger, or the savage remains in them. This may be folly; but the theory is a useful thing to

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string observations upon. Therefore, you see, it is a long journey from that feast where, *under* the table, lay those kings without thumbs and great toes, to that marvellous board of Jesus Christ spread *for* the maimed, the halt, the lame, the blind.

Now, the history of man, as a savage, is not altogether charming reading. And it must not escape you that men have much of the savage in them now, who yet are not *called* savages, and who do not consider themselves such. To the humorist there is room for constant mirth, in watching these "civilised" creatures, when they consider that they have done with the savages; to see spots of the old savage not yet worn out; feathers not yet plucked; smoothnesses not yet achieved. Watch the dress of these people, for instance, and see how long the trace of the savage remains in that! And then, lest we should think them to be altogether civilised, they cover themselves all over with beads. It takes time to work out beads; and so the glass-blower is set to work, in order that beautiful, soft materials may be made hideous by having these beads sewn on to them. You can't work them out; for they come up again and again. And then, women must have their civilised ears drilled, and the ear-rings of

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the savages must be suspended thereunto. Oh! if men and women understood what human beauty truly is, they would know that it cannot bear to have a hair's-breadth added to it. For the law of beauty is like the law of morals.

But we are not angry with these people. Not at all. They fill life with a kindly joy. We are not angry with the little child, who comes downstairs bedizened with the dress of its grandmother, or with a hat borrowed from its grandsire. And this "sportsman" in scarlet coat, shouting and bawling himself into excitement; we are not angry with him. He simply carries us back to Africa, or lands where we see him hunting the tiger. I look at the man with the red coat, and the woman with her paint and her patches, her powder and beads, and I say, "These are signs of the savage." Alas! alas! it is hard to lead man slowly and surely from barbarism of all kinds, into the Holy City of God. So utter and complete a change is there between man civilised by Christ, and man in his barbarous state, that Christ said, "Ye must be *regenerate;* ye must be *born again.*"

Then, how pleasant it is to see that there is some growth in language, too, which is slowly working away the cries and noises and howlings of primi-

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tive mankind, and making speech musical and expressive. The master of language is now able to give you a word for every shade and shadow of feeling. What a march *that* is! But, even in language, some of you have not got civilised yet. The talk of many of the people in this town is barbarous, more like bellowing than speech. The civilised man works out the inarticulate cries which he shares with the dog and the cow, and gives the finest articulation to every word. It is the office, then, of education, and very especially of Christianity, to work out of man, and ultimately out of society, whatsoever is barbaric.

So, further, pondering much upon the multitude of soldiers in this country, one speculates as to whether they belong to the barbaric ages; and one sees visions, and dreams dreams, and anticipates that by-and-by, when Christ's leaven has got to the very edges of the lump, they will go out. But at present, when I go through the country, I get a vision of kings, and dukes, and highnesses, and mightinesses, and I find that every one of them is a butcher, with his tools by his side. We are carried back to the tiger. These men are going to have a gala-day, so they go to the tiger and say, "Lend me a stripe or two." Claws are neces-

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sary until the human nails come; and the nails need to be long, while the heart is savage, but in proportion as the tiger is destroyed inwardly, we get done with the claw, and cut the nail, for its work is over.

So, if you ask me whether I think the soldier will be done away with, I say, "No, not yet." But *ultimately?* "Ah, yes!" Enough! enough! Christ is right. As surely as that Holy One did preach in Judæa of old, so shall all these tales of blood, and these men of blood, pass out of this world, and the poor shall be ground down no more. Every man who has had a vision of the future, every prophet, every poet this world has ever had, has looked forward to the time when men shall "beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks;" when war and the drum-throb shall no longer confederate together; when the tiger in man shall be proclaimed to be dead, and the lion gone, or, if not gone, only remaining that he may lie down with the lamb, and that the "little child"—God's little child, "born of water and of the spirit"—*Christ*, "may lead them."

So, when I look at the soldiers and their swords, I say, "There's a stripe of the tiger there." God

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give us a good deliverance from him! May we at last see the coming of the blessed days when the tiger shall be taken out of the heart of man, and his claws drop from the hands of man, and *pity* be known to be true manhood, because pity is utter divineness.

Evolution is the great law of all things. When God made man, He hid pity in some corner of him, He put mercy in him, and these are striving to come out. So, in the nakedest savage, my ancestor, as I watch him, I find hidden the fire of the divine love. Deep down in him is this feeling of pity; and now and then it comes out. So we rejoice! It is but a spot or two of light; but the light widens, until at last we come to Christ, out of whom all wrath seems to have gone, or, if not gone out, it is nearly dead.

Christ's great work, let theologians disguise it how they will, was to show to the world that the divine pitifulness of God is the very glory of man; that those pities and mercies which had hitherto been marked occasionally on a savage background, were but the faint glimmerings of the spangled stars of Bethlehem; that the law of love should ultimately be *the* law which should rule the whole earth; that this was the essence of all true religion,

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the standard of all civilization, the code of the future, the foundation of the New Heavens and the New Earth, the Holy Jerusalem descending from God.

If, in these days, some men seem anxious to get rid of Christianity, answer them thus: "It is the religion which, having greatened man, greatens God." For remember this: whatever a nation is, its *gods* are, and *must* be. Therefore, how shall you get the tiger out of man, if *God* is still to you "Lord of hosts" and "Man of war"? when you still say, "*Thus saith the Lord*, 'Smite, smite; put all to the edge of the sword, men, women, and children; let none of them be left'"? If you have still got this *God* of the sword, what can you have but fighting *men?* For, necessarily, they who believe in Him will be like Him.

Those who object to Christianity say that it is not original. We do not pretend that it is. Here and there, in some passage of Moses, we get an *occasional* gleam of light; but when Christ came he brought a broader, fuller light into the world. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth *peace, good-will* to man." The love that Christ taught was not an occasional love, not fascinated only by beauty, but a constant love, which was fascinated, engaged

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by *deformity.* In the old world there was a certain sort of savage gentleness, which came now and then, and which was chiefly attracted by what was lovely; but the attractions of Christ were to be the maimed, the lame, the halt, the blind, the harlot, and the prodigal. Now, therefore, it is useless to discuss whether Christianity is original. And if you ask me whether Christianity is of Divine origin, I must tell you I don't know; because, you see, I don't know what God is. I don't want my God to be divine, if He is like some of my neighbours' gods! But if Christ be right; if God be my *Father*, and He is *the* God; if Christ's declaration be true; if He whom Christ called God be the One and Only God, then I know what will follow. He who calls God "Father," "Friend," "Lover," "All-bountiful," "All-merciful," "slow to anger," is retained, bound over to be *himself* bountiful, merciful, slow to anger, a father to the fatherless, a friend to the friendless, a lover of the unlovely. If, therefore, a knowledge of this true God shall increase, then shall peace, true manhood, and sweet divineness become the law of the world. Thus, therefore, it is that Christ always conjoins these two things: to know God as a God of mercy, and to love man as the child of the God of mercy.

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Now, I put these things before you, simply because it is convenient and useful sometimes, amidst the multiformity of doctrines about you, to have something like a theory. Thus, then, in every man, woman, and child, there are all the things belonging to the lower life; but there exist also the Divine fire, touches of the Spirit, and the possibilities of to-morrow. The office of the school and the Church is the civilization of the world. Our duty is, therefore, slowly to work out of each individual, all that is savage, barbaric, fierce, vulgar, filthy, and unclean, and to proclaim that what John saw to be the law of the Holy City is the law of God and man: "I looked, and there was nothing unclean therein. And there was no darkness, no night there; for the Lord God giveth them light." But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers (all these savages and beasts of prey) cannot enter into the Holy City of God.

Thus, then, watching yourself and your child, you should try to discover and root out all that is savage and barbarous. Suppose your child pilfers something. Well, there are beasts that are feeble, and are therefore obliged to be sly. If your child

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is one of these feeble creatures, if he is a wild child of the feeble kind, what are you to do? Be savage? That would make him worse. No, there is one universal solvent, the flaming fire of the love of God; and whether your child be savage or sly, it is only by constant patience and unwearying love, that you can work these things out of him. When you are surprised by an outbreak of temper in your child, remember, it is the same sort of thing that has distinguished *you* at times. Whenever you see signs of these remnants of the old savage springing up in your child's nature, take some sweet oil of joy, some true unction of the spirit of love, and apply these, for thus only can you effect a cure.

I leave it to you, at your leisure, to see how these things act upon society. As long as men are tigers, they want dens to live in, but when they become angels, the Holy City will have come. There will be no darkness, for the beast of prey will not be there. "And I looked, and there was no need of the light of the sun," for all were living in the light of divineness, in the perpetual light of the love of God.

So I watch the soldier, the hangman, the judges

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and the police; and then I look at the ever-increasing multitude of God's apostles, the teachers, the philanthropists and surgeons, and I say, "Man is making good headway." I look at our Home for Incurables, and ponder upon that, and wonder what the old world would have thought about it. I know what the savage would say. He would say, "*Kill* them, for what *good* are they?" But what says the divine Christ? "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. Go out, and compel them to come in. Bring in these vile ones; for of such God's Kingdom shall be made, and the great evils under which they suffer shall pass away." So I take courage. I look at the Barracks, but then I look at the Home for Incurables, and I feel better. I look at the soldier, and then I go to the Hospital, and get warm again; for I know which will win—"the light of God shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, how can God forgive you? but if ye forgive them, how can God help forgiving you?" For it is written, "Unto the froward, I will show myself froward; but unto the merciful, I will show myself merciful."

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It remains, therefore, for you to find out how much of the ape, how much of the tiger, how much of the savage, how much of the vegetable, how much of the weed there is left in you, and to endeavour to eradicate it. Not of mere dress and manners do I mean it. It is not a question of feathers, or of how much paint you put upon your face, but "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." So may our prayer be, "O God, make us to know wisdom in the hidden parts"; for only as man becomes a child of God, can he learn to drop selfishness, and come at last to follow the teaching of the Lord,—"When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the lame, the maimed, the blind."

So, from the feast of that cruel old king, with those crippled kings under his table, we pass to those sweet laws of Moses, where he says that "the ox that treadeth out the corn deserves a feed," and that "you should not glean too close, but let it be for the widow and the fatherless; let the poor have a bunch of grapes left." Then, slowly on, until at last, in Christ, the savage is all gone, the beast has perished, the sword is sheathed, the man of war gone, and sweet peace and loving-kindness rules the earth. Our God is love, therefore love

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is the law of our life, the determining principle of all things, and by that law all things are tried. Are they accordant to that law? If not, they must follow the one course—advancing towards light and life—however long that may be.

THE END.

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